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RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
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Ser. 7

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SEVENTH SERIES.—No. 1.

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SOLDIERS AND SAILORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OF

RHODE ISLAND

PERSONAL NARRATIVES

SEVENTH SERIES

Numbers 1 to 10

1-10
1905-15

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Personal Narratives

SEVENTH SERIES, No. 1

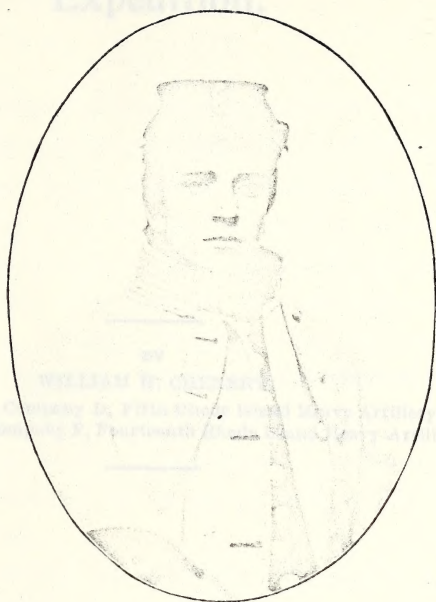
Reminiscences of the Burnside Expedition.

Private Company D, Fifth Rhode Island Battalion of Infantry
(Afterwards changed to First Rhode Island Heavy Artillery).

By WILLIAM H. CHENERY

[Late Sergeant Company D, Fifth Rhode Island Heavy
Artillery; First Lieutenant Company F, Fourteenth
Rhode Island Heavy Artillery.]

Reminiscences of the Burnside
Expedition.



WILLIAM H. CHENERY.

[Late Sergeant Company D, Fifteenth Maine Infantry,
First Lieutenant Company F, Fourteenth Maine Heavy Artillery.]

WILLIAM H. CHENERY,
Private Company D, Fifth Rhode Island Battalion of Infantry.

[Afterwards changed to Fifth Rhode Island Heavy Artillery.]

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1862.

Reminiscences of the Burnside Expedition.

BY

WILLIAM H. CHENERY,

[Late Sergeant Company D, Fifth Rhode Island Heavy Artillery;
First Lieutenant Company F, Fourteenth Rhode Island Heavy Artillery.]

PROVIDENCE :

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1905.

REMINISCENCES

At the commencement of the Civil War, when the earlier regiments from Rhode Island were organizing preparatory for active service in the field, I became infused with the military spirit. In December, 1861, I enlisted in Company D, Fifth Rhode Island Battalion of Infantry. My principal reason for enlisting in this company was that my old school teacher, [Edition limited to two hundred and fifty copies.] principal of the Waponecket High School, had accepted a commission as First Lieutenant in this company. He was afterwards killed by my side at the battle of New Bern.

Pardon me if I make a brief allusion here to this gallant officer:

¹ This battalion was afterwards recruited to a full regiment, and changed its name, and known as the Fifth Rhode Island Heavy Artillery.

² A few months before Lieutenant Brown was shot he had been encouraging me by his own noble example of bravery, saying to the men near him: "Come, if you love your country, here is your opportunity!" Shortly and those words were uttered when the fatal bullet struck him and he immediately expired.

REMINISCENCES.

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Pardon me if I make a brief allusion here to this gallant officer:

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² A few moments before Lieutenant Pierce was shot he had been encouraging us by his own noble example of bravery saying to the men near him: "Boys, if you love your country, now is your time to show it!" Hardly had these words been uttered when the fatal bullet struck him and he immediately expired.

Lieut. Henry R. Pierce was a man highly esteemed in the community in which he lived. When his untimely death was announced in Rhode Island the following fitting tribute to his worth (from which I make a few extracts), appeared in the Providence *Evening Press*, of March 20, 1862, written by his friend and associate in educational labors, Capt. William A. Mowry, late of Mowry & Goff's Classical School, in this city, and now a resident of Boston, Mass.:

"Among all the memorials of the fallen brave, few will be read with keener sympathy by a large circle of friends, acquaintances, and admirers, than these lines, in commemoration of the high, social, intellectual and moral character of him whose name stands at the head of this article. He was no mercenary soldier. He was not one who entered the ranks of the army simply for *glory*. He fought not for *glory*, but for his *country*. He was not born a soldier, or educated as one, but entered the service from pure motives of duty, of patriotism, of love for law and liberty.

"Born in a rural town in the Green Mountain State, and educated at Amherst College, he had engaged in the quiet pursuits of science and literature, devoting himself to the noble work of the instruction of youth in our system of public schools.

"Laboring in different fields in Massachusetts at the head of several of her public high schools, by a generous, sympathetic nature, high social qualities, a mind well stored and well disciplined, a noble, active, benevolent spirit, by an earnest and laborious devotion to his chosen work, and a firm and bold adherence to what he thought was truth and right, he had secured the confidence and esteem of all, and the affection and strong personal attachment of large circles of more intimate friends and acquaintances. Nor had he done less in Rhode Island.

"For nearly five years principal of one of our largest and most important high schools, he had won for himself a large place in the hearts of Rhode Island teachers and friends of public schools.

"That he should be the only officer of his rank that fell in that fatal battle, shows that he was brave and faithful in the hour of action."

When I had fully made up my mind to enlist, I went to a friend of mine to induce him to go with me. He invited me to room with him that night. I accepted the invitation. With all the arguments in my power I earnestly urged him to enlist, and wrestled with him like one of old until nearly day-break, when he finally consented.

The next day we proceeded to the camp of the Fifth Battalion of Infantry on the Dexter Training Ground in Providence. We entered our names on the enlistment roll, and were speedily furnished with the uniforms which Uncle Sam provided for his soldiers, doffed our citizens' attire for three years at least, "unless sooner discharged," or, as the boys would have it, "unless sooner shot."

Immediately after my enlistment I was granted a furlough for the purpose of visiting my relatives and acquaintances before leaving for the front. I recollect visiting my aged grandparents in the town of Medfield, Mass. When taking my leave of them my grandfather gave me this parting injunction: "Don't get shot in the back!" He had been a captain of militia himself, and his father a captain of

minute men in the War of the Revolution, responding with his company on the Lexington alarm, and serving under Washington at the siege of Boston, and with such examples to encourage me I certainly had no excuse to turn my back to the enemy.

While encamped on the Dexter Training Ground our time was occupied in drilling and preparing for the stern realities of war awaiting us in the future. As I had not informed the captain of my company of the fact that I had acquired a little knowledge of the manual of arms and marching movements by reason of having been a member of the National Guards of Providence, an organization formed for the purpose of State defence or other emergency, I was assigned a place in the awkward squad. This position I accepted with good grace notwithstanding that only the evening before I had served as a corporal at a drill of the battalion of the National Guards held in the old Calender building on Sabin Street.

It is related that while here an Irish soldier in one of our companies, whom the boys had nicknamed "Dublin," upon his entrance into camp had

not been properly instructed in his duties. He was ordered out on dress parade with his company. When the command was given, "Without doubling, right face," which, according to the old Casey tactics, meant face to the right in two ranks instead of four, our comrade took a liberal construction of this order, and was proceeding towards his quarters when the captain shouted to him, "Here! where are you going?" The soldier replied: "And shure, captain, didn't you say, 'Right face, without Dublin?'"

Dec. 16, 1861, our battalion was mustered into the United States service. On the 27th we were reviewed by the Governor and staff. Tents had previously been struck and baggage packed. After the review the line wheeled into column, and the battalion marched to the depot, and immediately boarded the train, and proceeded on its way towards our destination, Annapolis. On arriving at Stonington we embarked on the boat for New York, reaching that city the next morning.

Crossing the ferry to Jersey City we boarded the cars and were soon speeding along towards the

"City of Brotherly Love." We arrived at Philadelphia after dark and marched to the famous "Cooper Shop," well known to every old soldier, and were bountifully supplied with refreshments for the inner man. As we marched through the streets to the Baltimore depot we were warmly greeted by the Union loving men and women of this patriotic city. On our arrival at Baltimore we proceeded to a building where a collation was provided for us. After our repast we again resumed our march for the depot, where we were to take cars for Annapolis. What a marked contrast this city presented to the one we had left a few hours before. Recollections of the warm(?) reception given to the Sixth Massachusetts Volunteers several months before were still vivid in our memories. Some of the individuals along the route did not seem particularly pleased with our appearance. One old lady appeared at an upper window like Barbara Frietchie, but unlike that patriotic dame she exclaimed: "I hope there won't one of ye come back!" There was no one of us so dull but comprehended by that remark what

cause our aged friend had espoused in the great conflict.

On arriving at Annapolis we encamped in the grounds of the Naval Academy. The troops that were assembling here were being organized into a Coast Division under the direction and command of Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside. It was composed of three brigades, commanded respectively by Generals Foster, Reno and Parke. It was surmised that an important expedition was to be fitted out to operate on the southern coasts, but its destination was simply a matter of conjecture among us, known only to General Burnside commanding the land forces, and to Commodore Goldsborough in command of the naval fleet.

While here our hearts were gladdened by the arrival of the Fourth Rhode Island Infantry. They came in the night, and our cooks immediately went to work and provided hot coffee and rations for our hungry comrades. Battery F, First Rhode Island Light Artillery, also joined us here, and we had occasion to remember this battery afterwards, for it was attached to our brigade in the Department of

North Carolina, and we say it without fear of contradiction that no better body of men ever took the field than "Belger's Battery," as it was familiarly called.

On the 5th of January, 1862, the troops assembled here began to embark on transports, but it was not until the 8th that the Fifth Battalion went on board the ship *Kitty Simpson*, Captain Hepburn, master. On the 9th we were taken in tow by a tug-boat, and proceeded to Fortress Monroe. Here we found a large assemblage of vessels. There were ferryboats changed into gunboats; old lake boats into transports; and not a few river boats appeared with extemporized portholes through which frowned a cannon's mouth. The guns of the rebel batteries on Sewall's Point could be seen in the distance.

On the 12th of January the fleet of gunboats and army transports set sail. As we passed out of Hampton Roads we saw the *Cumberland*, *Congress*, *Minnesota*, and other war vessels lying quietly at anchor, and little thought then of the fate that was to befall them a few weeks later in their encounter with the rebel ram *Merrimac*, nor how our gallant

little *Monitor*, the "cheese-box on a raft," as the rebels styled her, would prove more than a match for her great antagonist.

We proceeded on our way, enjoying the sail, and wondering where we were bound. Rations had previously been issued to us, and all went well until we began to feel the heavy swell of the ocean, and it was not long before some of our comrades began to experience what it was to be seasick. Several of them stepped or rather rolled to the rail and paid tribute to Old Neptune. I was inclined to hope that I might be spared that affliction. But it was not so to be. I was sitting on top of the cook's galley, making sport of my sick comrades, when a nauseous sensation began to creep over me, and suddenly without any warning, I deposited the remnants of my dinner on the head of a comrade on the deck below.

"A life on the ocean wave
And a home on the rolling deep"

had no charms for me just then. But this was only the beginning of the discomforts of this voyage.

When our vessel was well out to sea our sealed orders were opened and we learned that our destina-

tion was Hatteras Inlet. There was considerable apprehension about this time in regard to rebel privateers, and the United States gunboats were constantly on the lookout for them.

An incident which happened that night we quote from the *History of the Fifth Rhode Island Heavy Artillery*:

"The ship's watch was startled by the sharp hail of 'What ship is that? Where bound?' coming from what seemed to be a gunboat that had come unpleasantly near in the darkness. Captain Hepburn was on deck at the time, and he answered: 'The ship *Kitty Simpson*—bound south!' With an oath the commander of the gunboat replied, 'I want a better answer than that!' and he called his crew to quarters and lighted his battle-lanterns. 'If you have any right to ask that question you know my destination as well as I do!' was the reply of the sturdy captain of the *Kitty Simpson*. Then he shouted to his own crew, 'Clear away that gun forward!' adding to those standing near, 'If they fire, I will!' He had a four-pounder iron gun forward with which to fire signals. By this time the gunboat had come so

near that it was seen that she was one of the armed ferryboats that belonged to the expedition, and the officer in charge of her apparently became satisfied that the *Kitty Simpson* was not the looked for rebel privateer, and bestowing some unsolicited advice on Captain Hepburn about answering hails more promptly in the future, he soon drew out of sight in the gloom of the night."

The next day a violent storm arose and the vessels of the fleet became widely scattered. As we neared Cape Hatteras we found many of the vessels had arrived before us, and some of a light draught were securely anchored in the smooth waters of Albemarle Sound, while the larger vessels were not so fortunate, and were experiencing great difficulty in passing over the bar. Our vessel was one of the number. It drew too much water. During the night an unusually heavy gale sprang up from the northeast and continued until the 16th. The next day we threw overboard a large quantity of ballast in order to lighten the ship. As the wind had not abated it was decided not to attempt to enter the sound until the following day. In the forenoon of

the 18th the propeller *Virginia* came to take us over the bar. We had proceeded but a short distance when we found our good ship aground, the hawser from the *Virginia* parted, and she left us pounding away at every sea, and it seemed to us as if we were surely going to pieces. In near proximity to us could be seen the wreck of the *City of New York*, which had gone down but a few days before, and though the crew and passengers after long exposure within sight of the fleet inside the bar were saved, the vessel and most of her cargo were lost. Our situation was indeed critical, and, as one of our comrades well said, "It seemed like being deathly sick, with a graveyard right under the window."

Several tugs came to our assistance, and one of them took a hawser, but it parted, and still left us hard and fast aground. In the afternoon a steamer came as near our vessel as it dared in that rough sea. An aide of General Burnside (Col. Archie Pell) was on board. He shouted to Major Wright commanding our battalion and directed him to order his men to jump from the deck of the ship to that of the steamer. Major Wright had the good

sense to forbid any of us from attempting such a foolhardy act, for not one-third of our battalion could have succeeded in boarding the steamer. Another hawser was passed to us and Captain Hepburn succeeded in getting his vessel afloat, a line from the steamer was taken on board, and the ship was towed over the bulkhead into the channel, amid the cheers of our men and the troops on the other vessels inside the Inlet.

Our quarters on board this vessel were extremely disagreeable. Most of the transports were provided with bunks for the men. But on our vessel the different companies of the battalion were assigned to positions between decks, and so limited were our sleeping accommodations that we were packed together like sardines in a box. The old familiar saying, "as snug as a bug in a rug" was no comparison. We were compelled to lie down spoon-fashion with no room to flop over. There was no danger of our falling out of bed. The place was dark and stifling, and a few ship lanterns were all the lights we had. The only resemblance that I ever read of was the "Dark Hole at Calcutta." It

was as much as a man's neck was worth to go on deck to obtain a breath of fresh air, for it was impossible to step without placing one's foot on a comrade's head or some portion of the body, and then you would be greeted with expressions that sometimes were anything but polite. Some nights when the weather was fair, a comrade and myself would take our blankets and get under a small boat on deck, preferring to sleep in the open air, although it was mid-winter, rather than lie down in the close and stifling atmosphere below.

The expedition was delayed at Hatteras Inlet for several weeks. While waiting here our rations became scarce, and we were limited to three crackers a day and a small ration of salt beef. This was not a very encouraging state of affairs for men who were just recovering from seasickness. We were also allowanced for water. Three pints a day were doled out to us, and if we desired any coffee we were compelled to fall into line, march up to the cook's galley, and empty out a portion of our ration of water with which to make our coffee.

On the 3d of February our battalion was transferred from the ship *Kitty Simpson* to the steamer *S. R. Spaulding*, where General Burnside had established his headquarters. Here, although we had no bunks, we had abundance of room, which you may well believe we appreciated. While on board this vessel I discovered and captured my first grayback. For fear that some of my hearers may imagine we mean a rebel, we will say right here that we do not. We dislike calling names, so we will spell it out, l-o-u-s-e! It was rumored that some of our men had found these creatures, but I did not learn until afterwards that it was a general complaint. Even the officers were not exempt. I soon found out that although I had a warm regard for my mother's sons, these little insects stuck closer to me than any brother.

While at the Inlet we often had an opportunity of seeing General Burnside as he moved about on the small gunboat *Picket* superintending the operations of the fleet of transports in their difficulties of entering the Inlet. Clad in his blue blouse and slouch hat his stalwart figure became familiar to us

all. His anxiety for the fate of his army was intense, and his solicitude and care for his men from that time on has ever endeared him to the soldiers of the Burnside Expedition and the Old Ninth Army Corps. And in the language of another we can truthfully say:

“Whatever record leaps to light
His never shall be shamed.”

The object of our expedition was to attack the Confederate forces on Roanoke Island. This island is a barrier to the waters of Albemarle, Croatan, and Currituck Sounds, and if our forces captured that island the entire northeastern coast of North Carolina and the rear approaches to Norfolk and Portsmouth would be open to our invasion and conquest. The island was well fortified and manned. The Confederate forces there were under the command of Brig.-Gen. Henry A. Wise (formerly a Governor of Virginia), but owing to his illness at this time he was detained at Nag's Head, a narrow strip of land lying between Roanoke Island and the Atlantic Ocean, and the command devolved upon Col. H. M. Shaw, of the Eighth North Carolina Regiment.

On the morning of the 5th of February, 1862, the fleet, consisting of sixty-five vessels, moved in the direction of the island. The naval portion of the expedition, as has been stated, was under the command of Commodore Louis M. Goldsborough. Fifteen gunboats under the immediate command of Commander Stephen C. Rowan led the advance. Then followed the army transports, and the whole presented a spectacle such as had never before been seen in North Carolina waters. The next day was stormy and the fleet remained at anchor; but on the morning of the 7th the sun came out and Commodore Goldsborough ordered this signal hoisted: "This day our country expects every man to do his duty!" The gunboats being prepared for action moved towards the narrow entrance, scarcely more than two hundred feet in width, which is called Roanoke Inlet. It was supposed that the rebels had erected batteries to command this narrow channel, but the fleet passed through without meeting any opposition. As the Federal gunboats came within range fire was opened upon the rebel boats, and continued as the fleet moved up the Sound. The enemy's vessels soon re-

tired to the north, as if desirous that the attacking gunboats should be drawn within the fire of the rebel batteries near the northern end of Roanoke Island. Piles and sunken vessels obstructed the channel opposite the point where the batteries were erected in order to prevent the passage of the fleet, and to detain them under the fire of the forts. The rebel gunboats had passed these obstructions through another channel well known to themselves. Our boats did not attempt to pursue them but directed their fire towards the batteries. The principal one, Fort Bartow, was a strong work and armed with heavy guns. The fort replied vigorously to the fire of our gunboats, but the flag-staff was soon shot away, the barracks set on fire, and its walls of sand fell into a confused mass from the well directed fire of our guns.

While this bombardment was going on the transports passed safely through Roanoke Inlet into the sound. We could see the naval fight from our steamer. We saw General Burnside come upon the forward deck and proceed to observe the operations of the gunboats through his field glass.

The general was desirous of obtaining information concerning the most available landing-place for his troops on the island, and was fortunate in securing the services of a bright mulatto boy sixteen years of age named "Tom." He had escaped from his master on the island. He knew all about the island and the forts and forces there. "There were," he said, "'The Overland Grays,' 'Yankee Killers,' 'Sons of Liberty,' 'Jackson Avengers,' and the 'O. K. Boys from North Carolina,' and others." He was asked if he knew of a good landing-place. "Oh, yes," he replied, "At Ashby's Harbor! I have been there many times!" He afterwards served as a faithful guide to our troops on the island.

About ten A. M. a detachment of men from our battalion commanded by Sergt. Charles Taft, of Company E, and under direction of Lieutenant Andrews, detailed from the Ninth New York to act as engineer on General Burnside's staff, were sent out to take soundings and reconnoitre for a suitable landing-place. They were accompanied by "Tom," the colored boy, as guide. They succeeded in landing and had proceeded but a short distance when

they were fired upon by a body of Confederates concealed in ambush, who rose up and delivered their fire into the midst of our detachment. Our men beat a hasty retreat to their boat, and then plied their oars vigorously until they were out of range of the enemy's fire. It was found that Corporal Charles Viall, of Company E, had been struck by a bullet in the centre of the chin, knocking out several teeth and carrying away a portion of the left lower jaw. Thus, Little Rhody had the honor of shedding the first blood from the land forces of the expedition. It is related as an instance of the grit of Comrade Viall, that when his wound had been properly bandaged he said to the surgeon: "Doctor! my face is spoilt for hard tack; isn't it?"

About four o'clock in the afternoon the fire from the Confederate batteries having slackened preparations were made to disembark the troops. Accordingly, about four thousand men from the several brigades of Foster, Reno, and Parke, were landed by means of light draught steamers, tugs, barges, and small boats. As they moved towards the shore the

scene presented was animated and striking beyond description.

It was the intention of General Burnside to make a landing at Ashby's Harbor, but when General Foster, who was with the advance detachment on the *Pilot Boy*, saw an armed force of the enemy with artillery at that point, he wisely changed his course and disembarked his men without opposition a little to the north of Ashby Harbor and in front of the Hammond House. Between this place and Ashby's lay a marsh impassable for artillery.

Each boat on approaching the landing-place seemed to vie with the others in its endeavors to be the first to land, and, as they grounded, the soldiers jumped overboard and waded through the marsh till they reached firm ground, and formed in a field near the Hammond House.

The Fifth Battalion landed in two detachments. The first went ashore about eight o'clock in the evening. Those of us that were in the second detachment laid down and made preparations for staying on the steamer all night. About ten o'clock we were aroused and ordered ashore. The *Union*

or *Wheelbarrow* as the soldiers of the Burnside Expedition will remember, was brought into requisition at this time. It was an old stern wheel steamer of light draught, that had made a long voyage (for such a craft), from the Kennebec River, and had arrived safely at the Inlet, and did good service in the subsequent operations of our expedition. The boys would have it that all that was required was a heavy dew, and it would then go wherever it was propelled. That night our detachment was transferred from the *S. R. Spaulding* to the *Wheelbarrow* and immediately started for the landing-place. On reaching the shore and disembarking, we endeavored to find solid ground for the soles of our feet, but like Noah's dove, we sought and found none. We stumbled and floundered through the mud and mire knee-deep until we reached *terra firma* and there joined the other detachment of our battalion. We laid down and endeavored to snatch a few hours' sleep, but a cold northeast rainstorm having set in made it an impossibility to do so. Towards daybreak I went to a well for the purpose of filling my canteen with

water, but before this was accomplished the long roll sounded and I hastened to join my battalion. We then heard picket firing on our front.

Nearly our whole division had landed during the night, and we were now ready to move upon the enemy. Our only artillery was six twelve-pounder boat howitzers, brought from the naval launches and commanded by Midshipman B. F. Porter. General Foster's brigade led the advance, followed by General Reno's. Our brigade under Parke was held in reserve in the early part of the action. The Confederates were entrenched in a strong earthwork in the centre of the island manned by a battery of three guns. The road approaching this battery being swampy and fringed with woods the march was slow and cautious. Soon we heard firing ahead, which to my mind resembled the popping of corn. This was followed soon after by the continuous roll and rattle of musketry intermingled with the roar of heavy guns. We then knew that our first brigade was at work.

To most of us this was our first engagement, and you could tell it by the stillness in our ranks. No

time or inclination for jokes now. The question has been often asked of soldiers: "How did you feel when going into battle?" I think the large majority of my comrades here present will say that they did not enjoy it to any great extent. It is my opinion that the men are few in number that can truthfully say they love the excitement of the battlefield. Perhaps Gen. Philip Kearny and some others may be exceptions to this rule. We can well appreciate the story told of the Duke of Wellington, who remarked of an officer who was leading a line into action, "He is a brave man!" "I should say," said an aide, "from his deathly-white face, that he is a coward!" "He is a brave man," repeated the duke, with emphasis, "He realizes his danger, and firmly accepts it. Such a man will always do his whole duty!"

It is related of a man in our regiment that he was accustomed to remark "That he had just as lives fight as eat," but I am informed that this astounding statement was made after he had retired from the service for his country's good, in consequence of a surgeon's certificate of disability. One of the big-

gest fellows in my company when on the Dexter Training Ground was wont to boast what he would do when he got into battle. He had an insatiate desire for gore then. I observed when the firing commenced at Roanoke that he was still as a mouse, and from what we saw of him afterwards he would have dropped out of the ranks then if he had dared. Probably he was not familiar with that passage of Holy Writ where it says: "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off!"

Early in the action our battalion was formed in line on the road and awaited orders. As we stood there momentarily expecting to go into action the wounded began to pass by us to the rear; those more severely wounded being carried by on stretchers, while those who had received slighter wounds were passing by on foot. One of the sights I recall was seeing a first sergeant severely wounded borne to the rear on a stretcher. He lay quiet and motionless, and apparently dead. Such scenes as these are the severest ordeals to which a soldier can be subjected; to be compelled to stand silent in the

reserve expecting every moment to go into action, and yet not allowed to participate with his comrades on the firing line. If there is anything more trying to the nerves of a raw recruit I do not know what it is. The Fourth Rhode Island Infantry and the Ninth New York (Hawkins Zouaves) of our brigade passed us and we followed them. The first brigade under General Foster came upon the rebel battery about a mile and a half from the Hammond House. This battery completely commanded the road. For the protection of their flanks the enemy relied upon the swamps and underbrush on either side of the road, which they considered impenetrable. The Federal troops, however, did not halt on account of these obstacles. While General Foster was engaging the enemy directly in his front, General Reno came up with his brigade and struck into the swamp on the left, for the purpose of turning the enemy's right. Subsequently General Foster advanced two of his own regiments through the morass to the right of the road for the purpose of turning the enemy's left. General Parke's brigade next appeared, and the latter gen-

eral pushed his command forward to the right also. In consequence of the water and the dense underbrush the progress of the troops was slow; but finally, after three hours or more hard fighting, General Reno ordered his command to charge, and the appearance of a portion of Foster's brigade on the opposite flank, aided by the Ninth New York of Parke's brigade who charged directly up the road in front, the enemy were compelled to abandon their works, leaving their guns unspiked, the dead and some of their wounded in the battery. The colors of the Twenty-first Massachusetts and Fifty-first New York were the first to be planted in the rebel battery.

While this was taking place our battalion had been ordered to proceed to the Ashby House, and occupy the place. General Parke had also directed Major Wright to throw out skirmishers and hold this position, and if attacked he promised him that he should be supported. When we arrived at the Ashby House skirmishers were deployed, but resulted in finding no enemy. We had been here but a short time, when we heard cheering in the direc-

tion of the rebel battery. There was no mistaking the sound of that good old Union cheer. Who that ever heard that shout on the battlefield will ever forget it. We then knew that our troops were victorious.

After the Confederates had been driven from the battery our forces followed, and the pursuit was continued to the head of the island where the entire rebel force on the island had concentrated, and where, after a slight engagement, the rebels surrendered to Generals Foster and Reno. The force that surrendered consisted of 159 officers and over 2,500 men. Colonel Hawkins, of the Ninth New York, after taking possession of a deserted battery on Shallowbag Bay, captured about 60 Confederates who were seeking a chance to escape from the island by Nag's Head. We gained by this victory complete possession of the island, with five forts, mounting thirty-two guns and 3,000 stand of small arms. Our loss was as follows: 37 killed; 214 wounded; and 13 missing. I believe the Confederates reported our loss as over 900 or more in killed and wounded.

Soon after our battalion had taken possession of Ashby House it was converted into a hospital, and our Assistant Surgeon Dr. Albert Potter, was placed in charge. With others of my battalion I was detailed to proceed to the battlefield and gather up the wounded. This was by no means a pleasing duty. After the wounded had been cared for, we returned to the field to remove the dead. While engaged in this duty I had an opportunity to visit the rebel battery. Several of the Confederate dead were lying inside the works, covered with blankets. I remember that two ladies living on the island were there for the purpose of identifying their slain relatives, as many of the rebel soldiers who had taken part in the battle belonged to North Carolina regiments. This was, indeed, a sad spectacle, and one that can never be effaced from my memory.

We found some of our Union dead lying in the swamps with their bodies partially in the water. I have seen the swamps of Louisiana, but as I recollect now I do not believe they can compare with those of Roanoke Island. Owing to the marshy nature of the shore at our landing-place, not a horse

was landed during the action, and the general, staff, and field officers performed their duties on foot. Ammunition was carried to the troops by hand. We carried our dead comrades to their last resting-places. Very soon after the trenches had been dug for the bodies of our poor fellows, they commenced to fill with water, and as we lowered them into their watery graves the lines of the poet came to my mind:

“No useless coffins enclosed their breasts,
Nor in sheet, nor in shroud we wound them.”

Among the Confederate dead was Captain O. Jennings Wise, of the “Wise Legion,” of Virginia, and son of Gen. Henry A. Wise. He commanded the companies of skirmishers at the battery who were thrown out to resist our advance on the morning of the battle. He was shot while endeavoring to make his escape in a boat from the island. He was captured, however, and died the next morning, defiantly expressing his regret that he could no longer live to fight against the Union. He was buried on the island. His body was afterwards exhumed and conveyed to Richmond.

The occupation and victory achieved by the Union arms on Roanoke Island, greatly cheered the hearts of the loyal people of the Union, as it was one of the first substantial victories gained by the Federal troops in the early period of the war.

I cannot forbear quoting an extract from General Burnside's official report to the War Department:

He says: "When it is remembered that for two months our officers and men had been confined on crowded ships during a period of unusual prevalence of severe storms, some of them having to be removed from stranded vessels, others in vessels thumping for days on sand banks, and under constant apprehension of collision, then landing without blankets or tents on a marshy shore, wading knee-deep in mud and water to a permanent landing, exposed all night to a cold rain, then fighting for four hours, pursuing the enemy some eight miles, bivouacking in the rain; without tents or covering for two or three nights, it seems wonderful that not one murmur or complaint has been heard from them. They have endured all these hardships with the utmost fortitude, and have exhibited on

the battlefield a coolness, courage, and perseverance worthy of veteran soldiers."

General Burnside also caused this order to be published to the troops on the island:

"HEADQUARTERS, DEPT. OF NO. CAROLINA,

ROANOKE ISLAND, Feb. 9, 1862.

General Orders, }
No. 7. }

The general commanding congratulates his troops on their brilliant and successful occupation of Roanoke Island. The courage and steadfastness they have shown under fire is what he expected from them, and he accepts it as a token of future victory. Each regiment on the island will inscribe on its banner, "Roanoke Island, February 8, 1862."

The highest praise is due to Brigadier-Generals Foster, Reno, and Parke, who so bravely and energetically carried out the movement that has resulted in the complete success of the Union arms.

By command of Brig.-Gen. A. E. BURNSIDE,

LEWIS RICHMOND,

Asst. Adjutant-General.

The loss of Roanoke Island was a severe blow to the Confederacy, and caused bitter recrimination between Maj.-Gen. Benjamin B. Huger commanding the Department of Norfolk, and his subordinate, Brig.-Gen. Henry A. Wise, who had immediate command of the island. General Wise fully appreciated the importance and value of the position in a military point of view. He claimed that it was the key to the rear defences of Norfolk, and should have been defended at the expense of 20,000 men, and of many millions of dollars. He complained that General Huger and the War Department at Richmond ignored his appeals for aid in the defence of the island. He demanded an investigation from the Confederate Congress, which was granted him. The Investigating Committee of the House of Representatives concluding their report to that body, said:

"General Wise, finding that his written appeals for aid in the defences of the island to headquarters at Norfolk and to the Department at Richmond were neglected and treated with indifference, repaired in person to Richmond and called upon the

Secretary of War, and urged in the most importunate manner the absolute necessity of strengthening the defences upon that island with additional men, armament, and ammunition. The Secretary of War replied verbally to his appeals for re-enforcements that he had not the men to spare for his command.

"It is apparent to the committee from the correspondence on file of General Wise with the Secretary of War, General Huger, his superior officer, the Governor of North Carolina, and others, that he was fully alive to the importance of Roanoke Island, and has devoted his whole time, energies and means to the defence of that position, and that he is in no way responsible for the unfortunate disaster which befell our forces upon that Island on February 7th and 8th.

"But the committee cannot say the same in reference to the efforts of the Secretary of War and the commanding officer at Norfolk, General Huger. It is apparent that the island of Roanoke is important for the defence of Norfolk, and that General Huger had under his command at that point upward of

15,000 men, a large supply of armament and ammunition, and could have thrown in a few hours a large re-enforcement upon Roanoke Island, and that himself and the Secretary of War paid no practical attention to those urgent appeals of General Wise, sent forward none of his important requisitions, and permitted General Wise and his inconsiderable force to remain to meet at least 15,000 men, well armed and equipped. If the Secretary of War and the commanding general at Norfolk had not the means to re-enforce General Wise why was he not ordered to abandon his position and save his command. But, upon the contrary, he was required to remain and sacrifice his command, with no means in his insulated position to make his escape in case of defeat.

"The committee from the testimony, are therefore constrained to report, that whatever of blame and responsibility is justly attributable to any one for the defeat of our troops at Roanoke Island on February 8, 1862, should attach to Maj.-Gen. B. Huger and the late Secretary of War, J. P. Benjamin.

"All of which is respectfully submitted.

"Signed by B. S. GAITHER, *Chairman.*"

The only comment we have to make upon this report is, that it was not very difficult for the Confederate authorities to criticize and explain how all these matters *might* have been adjusted, but the fact remains that General Burnside and Commodore Goldsborough, with the forces under them, did whip the rebels out of a well fortified position, captured the larger portion of the rebel army there, and the Confederates never regained possession of Roanoke Island.

Late in the afternoon on the day of the battle a soldier from the Twenty-fifth Massachusetts, an old schoolmate of mine came to visit me, and brought with him a good dish of baked beans, which he had managed to secure from the vessel on which his regiment had been quartered. You may be assured that in my hungry condition the "old army bean" was appreciated on that occasion. This comrade of mine was afterwards a captain of colored troops, and at the Battle of the Mine, in Virginia, he was severely wounded and taken prisoner. He was subsequently exchanged and returned home, but al-

though of stalwart frame, he never recovered from his wounds, and died soon after reaching the North.

On the night of the battle at Roanoke I did not get much rest, having volunteered to stand guard at the hospital for one of my comrades who was completely exhausted and unfit for duty. This was one of the saddest tasks I ever performed, and as the cries and groans of the poor fellows inside the hospital resounded in my ears it greatly detracted in my estimation from the romance of war.

The next day several of us built a hut made of pine tree branches, and our couch the succeeding night was comfortable compared with what we had experienced for several weeks previous. We slept so sound that I believe it would have required a vast amount of shaking to have aroused us, we were so completely worn out with fatigue and loss of sleep.

We had been confined on shipboard and had subsisted on our simple rations of hard bread and salt beef for such a great length of time that when the battle was over the men could not be restrained from shooting every stray pig or chicken that came in their way. And the sweet potatoes! what a de-

licious flavor they had! As the song runs, they literally "started from the ground" at our approach. We found them buried in large heaps of dirt to protect them from the frost. In my boyhood days I was accustomed to read a book entitled the "Life of General Marion," of Revolutionary fame. It speaks of General Marion at one time dining with a British officer, where the bill of fare consisted of only baked sweet potatoes. If they had the flavor of those we confiscated on Roanoke Island, I can readily understand how the general and his guest made a full meal on that dish alone.

Our battalion remained at the Ashby House but a short time, and then proceeded to Fort Bartow, afterwards named Fort Foster, in honor of the gallant general of the first brigade, and entered upon our duties here as a garrison to the fort, and also performed guard service at the headquarters of both Generals Burnside and Parke. I recollect that my first tour of duty was as a guard at the headquarters of General Parke.

This distinguished officer served as chief of staff to General Burnside when he took command of the

Army of the Potomac. He participated in the movement of the Ninth Corps into Kentucky, and commanded it on the march to Vicksburg, arriving before the surrender. In the reoccupation of Jackson, Miss., he was in command of the left wing of General Sherman's army. In the East Tennessee campaign he was engaged at Blue Spring in the defence of Knoxville, and in the following operations against General Longstreet, after General Burnside resumed command of the corps, he led one of its divisions, and in the Richmond campaign of the Army of the Potomac he was engaged at the battle of the Wilderness and the combats around Spottsylvania, but was then disabled by illness until Aug. 13, 1864, when he resumed command of the Ninth Corps before Petersburg. He was brevetted major-general in the United States army for repelling the enemy's assault on Fort Steadman, and took part in the pursuit of Lee's army until it surrendered.

On the 19th of February a joint expedition consisting of the Fifth Rhode Island Battalion on our old friend the ubiquitous *Wheelbarrow* and three naval launches under direction of Captain Jeffers

of the navy, proceeded up Currituck Sound, for the purpose of reconnoitering the shores and destroying some salt-works that were reported in operation on the coast. We were soon steaming along in the quiet waters of the Sound. These waters have always been the resort of pleasure fishermen. The wild duck abounds here, and the officers and men would occasionally exhibit their skill by firing at them with pistols and muskets. Everything progressed favorably until we reached the "Narrows," where, owing to the shallowness of the water and the very narrow and crooked channel we ran aground.

The following account is given of this in the history of the Fifth Regiment:

"We thought our boat could steam over any part of the State in a heavy dew or on a wet day; but this crooked ditch of mud and sand held a better hand than the *Wheelbarrow*, and 'trumps to spare.' Every expedient that Yankee ingenuity and sailor skill could devise was made use of. Cables and anchors were carried out on shore, and we tried to warp around the bends. We moved backward and then we moved forward. The steamer's bow was

jammed into one bank, while the wheel at the stern threw up the thick black mud of the other. We got in so far that we had quite as much labor and trouble in getting out; and then we tried to go through with the launches, only to find that they drew more water than the steamer. Darkness coming on, we managed to get back into the Sound, where we cast anchor for the night."

Volunteers were called for to go ashore that night and destroy the salt-works. We lay down that evening expecting every moment to be called up and sent out on what we supposed to be a perilous mission; but our services were not required. It was ascertained later that the importance of the salt-works was very much exaggerated. A few iron kettles were found there, owned by different individuals, which had been used from time to time to boil down the sea-water to obtain a supply for immediate or local use. On our way back to Roanoke Island a landing was made on the main land, where we found a small schooner that had been used by the rebel troops to escape from Nag's Head on the day of the battle. We sunk the schooner and then continued on our way.

While on the island one of the soldiers of my company had a singular adventure. An unexploded shell which had been fired from one of our gunboats on the day of the bombardment was lying in the woods near our camp. This soldier thought he would have some fun with it, and so he did—more than he had bargained for. He saw some loose powder lying around but never dreamed that the shell was loaded. He thought he would startle the guard near by, and he would then laugh at his discomfiture. But the laugh was on the other side, as we shall see presently. He struck a match and the explosion which followed was deafening, making a deep hole in the ground. Our comrade was not injured in the least, but very much frightened. It was a ludicrous sight as he came running out of the woods towards our camp with his hands to his ears. Pieces of the shell went flying in all directions, and some were found in the camp of a neighboring regiment some distance away. It is safe to say our comrade never again meddled with loaded shells.

Many of the soldiers of the Fifth Battalion will remember when a detail was made one night to un-

load some sutlers' stores under cover of the darkness from a vessel moored to a floating wharf which extended a short distance out into the Sound. The men went out to the vessel and brought in all the provisions they could handle. A certain place on shore had been designated where the provisions were to be deposited. The men ostensibly unloaded their burdens at this place, but in reality not all the provisions were so deposited, for the next morning under the floors of many of the tents in the battalion might have been seen provisions and liquids sufficient to have stocked a good sized country store. Our major that morning found to his intense wrath and utter amazement a row of bottles encircling his tent, placed there by some of the wags of the battalion. If he could have found out who the culprits were he doubtless would have made it warm for those luckless individuals.

Our battalion remained on Roanoke Island about six weeks, and afterwards took part in other operations in North Carolina, which do not come within the scope of this paper.

Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society
of Rhode Island

Personal Narratives

SEVENTH SERIES, No. 2

From the Rapidan to the
James under Grant

By EZRA K. PARKER,
[Late First Lieutenant Battery E,
First Rhode Island Light Artillery]

PERSONAL NARRATIVES
OF EVENTS IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION,
BEING A TRUE STORY BEFORE THE
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PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.

1892.

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FROM THE RAPIDAN TO THE JAMES UNDER GRANT.

Mr. President, Members of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Historical Society, and Comrades:

The paper which I have the honor to read to you to-night will be far from rising to the dignity of history. It will be merely personal recollections of the great campaign of the Army of the Potomac from the Rapidan to the James, in 1864. I hope that you will pardon what may appear to you like egotism. I will recite to you what I saw, heard and (in a small degree) what I did in that memorable campaign. Having served consecutively as private and second lieutenant in Battery D, First Rhode Island Light Artillery, from Sept. 4, 1861, to March, 1864, I then received a promotion to first lieutenant in the same regiment and was assigned to Battery E. On April 23, 1864, I reported for duty to Captain William B. Rhodes, the commanding officer of Bat-

tery E, in camp near Brandy Station, Culpepper County, in Virginia. As the senior first lieutenant of the battery had been detailed for duty on the staff of the Chief of Artillery of the Sixth Corps, to which corps Battery E was attached, I became the chief of the right section, which was very pleasing to me. I had been in Rhode Island on a thirty day furlough, and as I went from Providence to join my battery the friends that I met usually predicted that the campaign under General Grant would be a failure, as they were of the opinion that he had never met a man equal to General Lee. But we all know what happened. It was known in the army that the campaign would soon begin; in fact, orders were received daily and almost hourly to prepare to break camp. The commander of our battery issued an order of his own that we should be ready to move at nine o'clock on the following day. The quarters were to remain intact, but the carriages and the equipments of the men of every description were to be in their usual places. At the appointed hour the battery was hitched up and apparently was ready to move out on a march. Instead of moving out, a

general inspection took place. Every officer, from corporal to chief of section, acted as an inspector, and all superintended by the captain. Old soldiers know what an amount of rubbish troops will accumulate if they are in camp a few weeks, and especially if for three or four months. When the order comes to break camp, it almost breaks the soldiers' hearts to be compelled to abandon the stuff. So in the artillery they will try to smuggle it into their kits, upon the caissons and in the forage and baggage wagons. There were two fires burning on each flank and to the rear of the battery, and into these fires were cast almost or-quite a ton of articles too numerous to mention, but which we were not allowed to take. After this thorough inspection, the battery went out for a short drill and then returned to camp.

When the order came on the 3d of May, 1864, to be ready to march at four A. M. on the 4th, and to advance upon the enemy, Battery E was all prepared, and marched to join the Artillery Brigade of the Sixth Corps at Brandy Station. After the infantry of the corps had passed, the artillery fell in

and marched through Stevensburg to Germania Ford, crossing the Rapidan between three and four P. M. We then marched about two miles on the Brock road and encamped on Smith's plantation. All had been quiet through the day and we speculated not a little as to what the enemy was about. Staff officers were about our camp, and we were informed that General Grant regarded the operations of the day as a great success. We had crossed a deep and rapid river in the face of the enemy without losing a man. Then the officers of the battery, some of whom had been at Chancellorsville, expressed the wish that we might be able to get one good day's march through the wilderness into the open country in the rear of Fredericksburg before a serious engagement, and so all the army hoped. Those who knew General Grant predicted that if he could get General Lee out into the open country the war would be over before the 4th of July. A former commander of Battery E being short of men had rigged out his battery wagon to be driven by one man with reins, the same as a six-horse team at home. By the way, the teamer was an expert, as he

had driven such teams for years for A. & W. Sprague. Unfortunately, we started out this May morning with such a rig for our battery wagon. As we approached the pontoon bridge across the Rapidan I saw the chief of artillery of the whole army sitting upon his horse reviewing his artillery of the Sixth Corps. I saluted and passed on. A few minutes later he came riding up to the head of our column and inquired for the commanding officer of the battery. I informed him that I presumed that he was back down the column. "Well," he said, "what sort of an equipment have you for your battery wagon?" I asked him if he had noticed it, and he said he had. He further said that as soon as we made camp we should put on three postillions and that I should so inform the captain. He further said that this would be a fine arrangement for a stampede should we get under fire. As soon as he was able, the captain got back to regulation requirements. Battery E slept well that night, encamped on Smith's plantation. We were up at light, and at six A. M. marched into the wilderness; for at five A. M. the Fifth and Sixth Corps had engaged the en-

emy. We here dropped out of line our battery wagon, forge and baggage wagons, and were ready at once to go into battery firing to the right. General Grant and staff passed us as we slowly advanced. It was soon reported to us that owing to the dense, thick woods, it was impossible to find positions for the artillery. We went into camp at night within a few yards of the headquarters of Generals Grant and Meade. On Friday, May 6th, reveillé sounded at three A. M. Around us were other Sixth Corps batteries. We received favorable news of the engagements of the day before, and were told that we had more than held our own, and that the loss of the enemy was greater than ours. As we did not move out of park, I spent some time looking at Generals Grant and Meade through a field glass. Grant smoked imperturbably as the Sphinx, while General Meade seemed to show nervousness and anxiety. A stream of staff officers and orderlies were continually reporting to General Meade. Occasionally General Grant would appear to take part in the conversation. He seemed to be as cool as a cucumber, but still it occurred to me that while he

was smoking and whittling, he, like the Irishman's owl, was keeping up a "divil of a thinking." Later in the afternoon General Sedgwick commanding our corps was at general headquarters, and it was reported that he said that the whole rebel army could not drive him out of his position, and I presume that it could not, had it attacked him in front, as he was strongly entrenched. But what rapid changes occur during a great battle. Just before dark that very day, General Ewell sent a strong force around the right flank of our army, which was a division of Sedgwick's corps and routed it, capturing a brigade and two brigadier-generals. The enemy soon got lost in the dense and dark woods, and as soon as they were able went back to their main line. It seems that the two generals captured were not regarded favorably by our officers of high rank, at least one was reported to say that now they will be where they can do no harm. As soon as the rout began a section from our battery was sent for to report to General Sedgwick, who was upon his horse in plain sight near the Brock road at the edge of the forest. Of course, the right section was sent and I

had the pleasure to report to the general. We came up on a trot, and as I got near enough to him to be heard I began to say that I was ordered to report to him. He started ahead at a rapid gallop and motioned for me to follow. We went at a sort of John Gilpin rate of speed until we came to a road that branched off the Brock road down to the left. Here he halted and directed me to go in battery, load with canister, and point my pieces, one up the left road and the other up the right, also to halt everybody coming down the roads and to try to form a line of the infantry upon my guns on both flanks. I sent my sergeants up the roads to halt all stragglers, also to notify me if the enemy was advancing down the roads. Some of the broken up infantry began to come in and readily rallied on the line at the guns. And it was but a few minutes before we had a thousand men in line, and though they had been routed in the darkness by a murderous fire from the rear, they were not by any means whipped. When these dispositions had been made, General Sedgwick, hearing our men off to the right in the woods, loudly calling, put spurs to his horse and dashed into the

jungle composed of thick, stubby trees woven over with green briars. He wore a stout uniform of heavy beaver cloth, and it was reported afterwards that he tore it to shreds. An officer near me remarked that he would prefer a charge into the enemy's line. We lay in our position, hoping to have a brush with the enemy, but none of the enemy came our way. About eleven P. M. we were withdrawn, as a new line of battle had been established far in our rear, which was continuous to the Rapidan. As I reported to the battery, I found General Sedgwick still directing affairs. He placed a battery in a certain position and the captain of the same came to ask him how he was to get out in case he should be compelled to retreat. The general told him he need have no concern, as he was to hold the position, and if it became necessary to leave it he could take orders from a rebel officer. A member of the general's staff informed me that when the right flank of his command was turned, the general cried like a child, but went in with all his staff to stop the rout and to establish a new line. But this was the last spasm of the foe. He utterly refused to come out of

his works to fight us, and in consequence the commanding general began the famous flank movements to the left, taking off a corps on the right flank and putting it in on the left. Officers about us began to speculate as to where we were to go. Some down-hearted fellows said back across the Rapidan. But this could not be done as the enemy held Germania Ford. Then they said Ely's Ford was open and that Grant had held on to that for use in case of disaster. Others said that we were going to Richmond. All hoped so. The next morning we pulled out and marched forward to the left. We all felt well in consequence, for we were not going back. We made no great progress, however, until dark. Then we marched along rapidly, past Chancellorsville toward Spottsylvania Court House. On the way our bands played, "O, ain't you glad to get out of the Wilderness," which was greeted with prolonged cheers by our brave men. Students of history know that had not the nominal commander of the Army of the Potomac interfered with the dispositions made by General Sheridan, chief of cavalry, the rebel forces never would have occupied Spottsyl-

vania. The enemy during the five or six days preceding Spottsylvania had been brought to this point, viz.: to fight only behind fortifications and not in the open unless forced to do it. This fact was understood by our soldiers, and as a consequence gave them great confidence in action. The first thing of much importance that Battery E was called upon to do here was to go in at the point in our lines where General Sedgwick had been shot. A member of the staff of the chief of artillery of the Sixth Corps was present to guide us to our position. We were directed to march to within about forty yards of the line with our horses, then unhitch, and, with the aid of the infantry, move the pieces by hand. The right section was moved in first, which brought upon us a smart fusilade from the enemy's sharpshooters. All the pieces were placed in order. Then an investigation was made by the captain and chiefs of sections as to the location of the enemy's artillery and the sharpshooters. We soon placed them. The artillery was some five or six hundred yards distant and screened by the tops of trees growing in a deep ravine. The most of the sharpshooters were in the

tree tops and not over two hundred yards away. We had, up to this time, only one man knocked over. He doubled up and was carried aside as dead. A half-hour after he rose from the dead. A spent ball had struck him squarely on the buckle of his belt, and it had completely paralyzed him. Before night, however, he was nimbly acting as a cannoneer. Having located our objectives, we first paid attention to the sharpshooters in the tree tops. We loaded with canister and aimed point-blank at their assumed locations. We fired rapidly a grist of canister, and the result was that the rebels were wiped out. The officers of the battery were watching with field glasses the effect of the fire, and it did them good to see the canister rip through the trees completely demoralizing the sharpshooters. Then we fired for six hundred or seven hundred yards solid shot, shell and shrapnel as rapidly as possible. We had a detail of willing infantry assisting our cannoneers in bringing up ammunition. Allowing twelve seconds for loading and firing a piece, this would give five rounds from each gun per minute, and, from the six guns, thirty rounds per minute, or one every two

seconds. I think the firing for about twenty minutes was probably more rapid than that. Our guns were the twelve-pounder brass Napoleons, firing only fixed ammunition. Their extreme range was about one mile firing solid shot. Soon the rebel fire ceased altogether, and orders were given us to cease firing. An aid-de-camp was sent by General Ricketts commanding a division of the Sixth Corps and in command of this portion of the line, complimenting our battery upon its effective work. An officer of the infantry who was present when General Sedgwick was killed stated that a soldier dodged quite low on account of a bullet that came near him. The general said to the man, "What are you dodging for, they can't hit an elephant—they can't hit me." And then came the fatal shot from a sharpshooter in those tree tops to which I have referred, and struck him under the left eye and he fell into the arms of Major Whittier, a beloved member of his staff. General Sedgwick was killed on the 9th of May. From that date until the 12th, our battery was moving night and day, first to the left, then back to the right through mud and water. On the morning of

the 12th we were ready to move at three A. M. This was the day of General Hancock's splendid success, in capturing the enemy's salient known as the Bloody Angle. This 12th of May, 1864, at Spottsylvania Court House, Va., was a cold, raw, rainy day. Early in the day after Hancock's advance from our position we swept with shot and shell the rear of the enemy's salient. We fired about one hundred rounds and then desisted, as we learned that the salient had been taken. The enemy put forth great efforts to retake the angle. The battle during a greater part of the night continued unabated. The brave men of the Second Corps, supported by equally as brave men of the Sixth Corps, held possession of the salient, and the enemy withdrew toward morning. Our battery was parked near by, north of the angle. I had intimations given me that probably at daylight I would be called upon with my section to relieve a section of a regular battery at or near the angle. In consequence of this, I carefully inspected my section, made some changes of horses from the caissons to the pieces, as the caissons were to be left in the rear until called for. I

anxiously awaited the dawn. Our horses had been fed and the men had had their coffee. No order came, and the captain suggested that I ride up the hill and see what was going on. I took an orderly and rode forward. A slightly wounded man informed me that we had licked the Johnnies and that we held the works. I rode up to the angle, and although I had seen many bloody portions of a great battlefield I had seen nothing more sanguinary than this. The dead bodies of the enemy had been taken by their comrades and used with dirt, logs and rails to make breastworks. I noticed a wounded rebel who lay partly covered with dirt, an eyeball hanging upon his cheek, whom I proposed to relieve. I told the orderly to dismount and give him some coffee from his canteen. He refused to take it from a Yankee and also appeared to be feeling around under him for a weapon. I had heard of cases where a wounded foe had sometimes killed his enemy under like circumstances, and I was on my guard. The orderly pulled him out of the mud and we left him. The next thing that arrested my attention as being uncommon, was a tree some ten or twelve inches in

diameter, cut almost off by bullets. I am informed that a section of this tree is now in the museum at the national capitol. From the 12th of May until the 19th the army was continually marching and countermarching, striking a blow here and there at the enemy and receiving not a few good ones in return. The enemy still seemed to fear to meet us outside of his works. The 19th of May ended the battles around Spottsylvania. All the bravado about driving the Yankees across the Rappahannock had departed. This continual attrition was wearing out the Confederates faster than the Federals. In order to draw out the Confederates General Grant sent Hancock alone with his Second Corps to Milford Station, about twenty miles away to the south. But Hancock was unmolested. The rest of the army soon went to the North Anna River. Our corps crossed at Jericho Mills and went into position at six p. m., May 24th. On the 26th, we went back to the north bank of the river at eight a. m. The corps started for Chesterfield Station on the Virginia Central Railway. It was now evident to all observers that it was to be a very close game for

the Union commander to get near to the city of Richmond north of the James River. But that resistless and persistent will power of the Lieutenant-General gave the Confederate commander no rest. General Grant determined to make another great effort to get between the Confederate army and Richmond. For that purpose he sent General Russell with his first Division of the Sixth Corps, two divisions of Sheridan's cavalry and Battery E, First Rhode Island Light Artillery, and the First Ohio Battery, to secure the bridge across the Pamunky River, near Hanover town. I might say that by general order of May 16th, all six gun batteries had been reduced to four guns. The six caissons had been retained as well as all the horses. The distance from Chesterfield was about thirty-three miles. General Russell was instructed to march the thirty-three miles in about eight hours. The right section of battery E, under my command, was ordered to march in the rear of the first brigade and to keep up with it. The troops were to be at the bridge about dawn of the 27th. We started off, and for about twelve or fifteen miles made good progress, as the

night air seemed quite cool and bracing. The infantry marched rather faster than an ordinary horse will walk, so that occasionally on down grades I mounted the cannoneers and trotted for awhile until up with our brigade. At length the stragglers began to appear in considerable numbers. Finally, after we had covered about twenty-five miles, I came to the rear of the column, which to me appeared to be resting. I halted the section and dismounted the drivers. I had been fortunate enough to find a stream, and I gave both men and horses a full supply of water. After halting some ten minutes, I inquired of an officer how long the column was to halt. He replied that the column had not halted, that General Russell and staff and all of the First Brigade that could keep up were then marching. His command had stopped from sheer exhaustion. I immediately moved forward, sending a sergeant ahead to ascertain how far in advance the general was. We soon came to a long gentle decline in the road, and, after mounting the cannoneers, we made good time for about two miles, when the sergeant reported that the general was a half-mile ahead. We soon

caught up with the marching column, which was no more than a small regiment now, and were informed by an officer of the general's staff that we were not far from the Pamunky. It seems that the divisions of cavalry were marching one on each of our flanks. There were indications of the morning light as we came to the edge of a dense fog. This marked the lines of the river valley. My pieces were brought up in as quiet a manner as possible, unlimbered and loaded with canister ready to take the bridge which a scout informed us was less than one hundred yards distant. Skirmishers at once were sent out to line the river bank and to search for the enemy. We were fearful that the rebel guards at the bridge might attempt to burn it if they learned of our presence. Our skirmishers were ordered to make a dash for the bridge in case it was fired and attempt to put out the fire and retain the bridge. As the light came the fog seemed to disappear, or lift, and, being some yards in advance, I was able to locate the end of the bridge. I at once moved my pieces by hand to the front and requested the general to allow me to rake the length of the bridge. He sent a dismounted

staff officer to the picket line in order to warn the men to be out of range of the end of the bridge, and after his return I was informed that I could discharge my pieces. But it seems that a squad of the skirmish line had gone on to the bridge and crossed it. Just as the staff officer returned, we heard a few straggling shots and we held the bridge. The enemy's vedettes fired a few harmless rounds and fled. Our infantry began to pass over the bridge, and I was sent over with them to form a line upon the edge of the highland bordering the river valley. After placing my guns in battery on the sides of the road, I dropped down by the side of a gun and was asleep in a few minutes. So the troops in the advance rested on this line until the rest of the corps came up, which was about noon, long after our arrival. Here we had hopes that we could get between the Confederates and their capital, but our hopes were not realized. We found a rebel force overlapping our left flank as soon as we began an advance. But General Sheridan had found General Fitz Hugh Lee down at Old Cold Harbor. This was the same Fitz Lee who is now a major-general in the United

States Volunteer Army. General Sheridan was fast cleaning up Fitz Lee, when an infantry brigade of Confederates from Hoke's division came to his rescue. General Sheridan was about to retire, but General Meade ordered him to hold his ground, as it was important and infantry was then marching to his support. The Sixth Corps, with its artillery, was rushed forward to reinforce Sheridan. We were expected to reach him about nine A. M., but did not until about noon. The infantry went forward with a part of the batteries and relieved our cavalry. Our battery, and some others were brought up in line and halted. Here occurred a little incident which was of no consequence, but which I have never forgotten. Right in the rear and center of our guns was a small persimmon tree, some twenty-five feet in height. A tarpaulin was taken from a caisson opened to two thicknesses and spread upon the ground under the persimmon tree. The four commissioned officers of the battery at once lay down upon it and fell fast asleep. I had on all my equipments, belt, saber, spurs, revolver, and gauntlets. After I had lain flat upon my back asleep for per-

haps a half-hour, something awoke me so that I opened my eyes. I was not a little surprised to see peering into my face a small gray snake with a very sharp eye. As by instinct, I made a grab for him with my gloved right hand. I was not quick enough to catch him, but he ran off like a flash, much like a squirrel. I at once arose, and in so doing the other sleepers were roused up. To their inquiries as to what was the matter, I explained that there was a curious little snake under the tarpaulin that I wanted them to help me kill or capture, as I had not seen its like before. They all sprang up, and the search for the reptile began. After carefully rolling up the corners, I espied him near the edge, with his head in view, so while a comrade attracted his attention, I transfixed him on the point of my saber. Just as the hunt was over the surgeon of our artillery brigade came along and examined the snake. He inquired as to the circumstances of his capture, which were explained to him as above. "Well," he said, "you had a close call, as that was a tree mocassin, one of the most poisonous of reptiles." He said that when I had tried to grasp the serpent in my hand he

undoubtedly struck it and then fled, but in consequence of having my hand protected by thick buckskin, he did not succeed in striking his fangs through it. The snake had evidently been upon the persimmon tree when we had lain down.

All this time there was a sharp fight going on two or three hundred yards to the front, and soon after two P. M. we were lined up to take a hand in it at the distance of about five hundred yards from the enemy's artillery. We expended all the ammunition in our chests and after dark refilled them. This was June 1, 1864. On June 3d the grand assault was made upon the rebel works, by order of General Grant. This proved to be disastrous to our army, as the loss of the enemy was small in comparison with ours. Our men charged bravely, and fought with the old vim of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania. Still it was not possible to carry the fearfully strong rebel lines and forts. General Grant, in after years, regretted that he ever ordered this assault, which resulted in the death and wounding of 7,000 or 8,000 brave men, without any corresponding return. He also says the same in regard to a

similar assault before Vicksburg. It is a matter of common knowledge that while with the Army of the Potomac he awakened but little enthusiasm as he passed along the columns on the march or the battle lines when in position. No spontaneous shouts went up on account of his presence. To his soldiers he seemed austere and cold. At no time, with one exception, during the march from the Rapidan to the James, did I ever see the army in a mood to greet him with hearty cheers. When in the Wilderness and Spottsylvania it was found that he had no thought of retreating across the Rappahannock, either by way of Ely's Ford or by way of Fredericksburg, I think the men would have cheered him to the echo and would have borne him on their shoulders. The announcement that General Grant made to the government that he would fight it out on this line if it took all summer pleased his army. But aside from all this, there was no such hearty greeting for him as attended McClellan or Burnside, or Hooker when they commanded the same army. But that silent man, fully bent upon the capture or dispersion of the army of Northern Virginia, knew well

how to bide his time. When he refused to receive General Lee's sword at Appomattox, the praise of all his soldiers and the heartfelt thanks of all his countrymen were his forever. The heavy fighting about Cold Harbor ended with the great assault. There were sharp collisions now and then, but no prearranged attacks from either side. As we could not break through the enemy's lines, it was apparent to us all that we could not get closer to Richmond, north of the James, and that it was a hopeless matter to attempt to get between the rebel army and their capital. Hence, General Grant remained at Cold Harbor nine days, from the 3d of June until the 12th, in maturing his plans and preparing for crossing the James river near City Point, where he could be in touch with General Butler at Bermuda Hundred, between the James and Appomattox Rivers, in what the general was pleased to term a bottle, and was bottled up. This remark was rather hard upon General Butler, but still it has occurred to me that he could well retaliate by asking, "Who put me there?" Had a large part of the rebel army been concentrated to overwhelm him, I think that he

would have found the bottle the proper thing. There seems to be no good reason, however, with Grant near, that Butler did not push forward, like a Phil Sheridan, and capture Petersburg. But still the capturing of places or cities was not the main purpose of the lieutenant-general. As he explained to General Sherman that Johnston's army was his (Sherman's) objective, so Lee's army was Grant's. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston and Gen. Robert E. Lee carried Atlanta and Richmond at their saddlebows. It was not necessary for Sherman to march into Charleston,—that hotbed of secession. He took it one hundred miles away. On the night of the 12th of June, 1864, the Army of the Potomac began its march for the James. The first interesting feat for us to perform was to cross the Chickahominy, that stream made so famous during the seven days. The Fifth Corps was to cross at Long Bridge, and the Second, Sixth and Ninth at Jones' Bridge. We camped one night in the valley of the Chickahominy. It was upon a long intervale, which at times of high water was overflowed. It was a large, natural meadow. I told a small snake story above, or at

least, it was about a small snake. I will now relate a large snake story. Some four batteries encamped on this meadow in a straight line, occupying, I should judge, some four hundred yards front. The thick grass had started up, growing luxuriantly. Battery E had gone into park, and we had stretched the picket line on the spare wheels and were arranging for quarters, when it seemed all at once that the surface of the meadow was alive, squirming and crawling around. Our wall tent was being pitched. I dismounted and trod upon something which appeared to be alive and soft. I espied a large serpent. Officers and men in all the batteries espied serpents, too. The men, armed with handspikes, spades, clubs, and sabers, at once opened a war of extermination upon the snakes. After killing them they were pitched into piles. They were a species of water snake, gray and yellow in color, of different lengths and sizes. Some were five feet in length and as thick as a man's arm. Some were no more than three or four feet in length. It seems that they had come, as usual, out of the waters of the Chickahominy in order to insure a proper increase of water snakes in

the valley for the year 1864. But the artillery of the Sixth Corps gave them a decided set-back. They were not poisonous. When we left the next morning, it seemed that the crow and other carrion birds might enjoy themselves for a day or two with a royal feast. We marched from the camp on the meadow to Charles City Court House. On the 14th of June our battery hitched up at three A. M., and at six A. M. started on the march and halted within three miles of the James River upon a beautiful estate said to have belonged to Ex-President John Tyler. The house had been almost stripped of everything. It afforded a fine example of the vandalism of war. So on the 15th of June, 1864, our battery crossed the James upon a pontoon bridge composed of one hundred and one pontoons about 2,100 feet in length, at a place between Windmill Point and Fort Powhatan. In mid channel the water of the James in depth was reported to be from twelve to fifteen fathoms. As the rebels refused to come out and meet us in open fight, we crossed the James as victors full of confidence. We began to appreciate the lieutenant-general. We regarded the rebels as about used up.

We did not reckon upon the tough fights that they were to give us about Petersburg and Richmond, nor of their grand raid in the valley of the Shenandoah, and of their knocking at the back door of our capital. Less than six years before this time I had sailed several times up and down the whole navigable length of the James River in voyages from Norfolk to Richmond. I had admired the old baronial estates that reposed in so much beauty and dignity upon the banks of the lordly river. I then had warm friends in the Old Dominion and little did I dream that when I should again visit this fair region it would be as an enemy enrolled in a great Union army of 150,000 men. When the Army of the Potomac found itself, about the middle of June, upon the right bank of the James, both friends and foes naturally asked, "What has it accomplished?" Was it possible that in the near future the Army of Northern Virginia would be conquered? Well, these things had been accomplished; on the first of May, 1864, the people of the Confederacy, led on by their press and their public men, believed that the cavalry and infantry of the army of Northern Virginia were

invincible. As to the artillery, they claimed that theirs was inferior only in number of guns and equipment. (The Union batteries had better ammunition and better harnesses and camp equipage.) We all know also that this superiority claimed by the Confederates for their cavalry and infantry was admitted by the copperhead orators and press of the North. Even a commander of the Army of the Potomac had asked, "Who ever saw a dead (Union) cavalryman?" The infantry led by General Stonewall Jackson had become famous throughout the world. Now, this idea in regard to the superiority of the cavalry and infantry arms of General Lee's army had been completely knocked out of the heads of both Unionists and Confederates first when the Union cavalry, under the great leadership of that matchless general, Phil Sheridan, encountered and set upon General J. E. B. Stuart and his famed cavalry at Yellow Tavern, routing it completely and killing its leader. Thereafter the only thing the Confederate cavalry could boast of was its past brave deeds; for it had ridden twice around the Army of the Potomac, if not three times, when under the

command of McClellan and Meade. Second, when the old Army of the Potomac crossed the Rapidan and marched boldly into the Wilderness, the Army of Northern Virginia was impatient as their own bloodhounds after a runaway slave, to get at their foe. They were to drive them back ignominiously, as they had Pope, Burnside, Hooker, and Meade. "The Yankees cannot stand our infantry," said one of their generals. "We have trapped them in the Wilderness, where they cannot use their artillery." They (the Confederates) fought bravely the 5th of May, also on the 6th, and when General Longstreet was wounded on that day, if the Union line had been pressed forward General Grant thought that the rebel army would have been driven in disorder and completely defeated. At least, the danger was so imminent that General Lee led a charge to restore his shattered line. After May 6th, the rebels kept within their fortified lines. The confidence in their wonderful infantry began to be shaken, and when, on that rainy 12th of May morning at Spottsylvania, Hancock, the superb, swept over that bloody salient with his grand old Second Corps, capturing a whole

division with his artillery, the rebel infantry was thoroughly convinced that they were not the soldiers they believed themselves to be at the commencement of the campaign. It is true we had conquered no army nor entered any capital, and we had met with great losses, both in men and material, but no more, proportionally, if as much, as had our enemy. We had, however, established these facts, that we were their superiors and masters in all arms of the service, and all we needed was time to bring about the day of Appomattox.

Every intelligent soldier in the Army of the Potomac knew this. And I appeal to you, my comrades, those of you who were before Petersburg and Richmond, if at any time you did not long to meet the foe openly between the fortified lines, and there and then fight out the battle! But, my comrades, let us give honor where honor is due. The reason that such a change had come over the military situation was owing altogether to the splendid leadership of Grant and Sheridan. Meade was patriotic, but he never could have led us through and out of the Wilderness. The difference between Grant and Meade is shown

in this campaign to which I have been calling your attention. From the 14th of May until the middle of June, 1864, there had been a continuous battle, day and night, somewhere along the lines. The enemy was harassed as he had never been before. General Meade, like other officers of high rank, was beginning to learn something of the art of war. When, on that memorable 2d of April, 1865, the rebel army was routed and compelled to retreat, Grant ordered Meade to pursue the foe without delay. It was reported that Meade replied that the men were extremely tired, had been up for forty-eight hours and had no rations. Grant merely reiterated his order, and remarked that probably the enemy was as tired and as poorly supplied as were our men. And he wound up by reading a dispatch from General Sheridan that he was then in hot pursuit of the enemy and was about fifteen miles from Petersburg.

In conclusion, my comrades, I think you will agree with me when I claim that this great campaign from the Rapidan to the James, costing, as it did the sacrifice of so many brave men, and bringing upon others grievous wounds, with attendant pain and

suffering, was a grand success, and was worth all its cost. I esteem it a great privilege that I have lived with you to see the day when a great majority of our southern fellow citizens rejoice at the result of this campaign and regard its results as a blessing upon the entire country.

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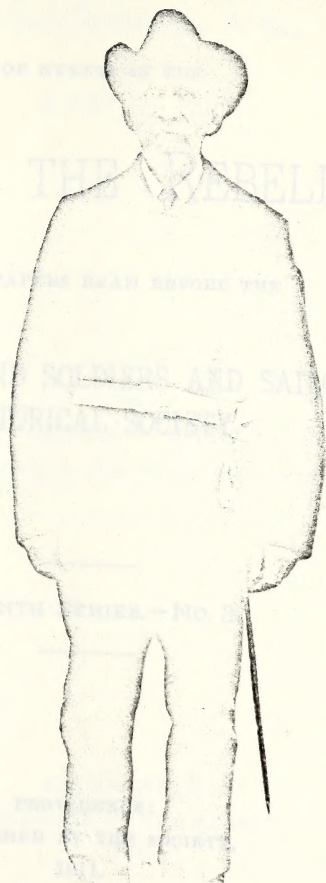
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PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY,
1911.

An Incident in the Battle of Middleburg, Va.,

JUNE 17, 1863.

BY

CHARLES O. GREEN,

Late of Troop M, First Rhode Island Cavalry.

PROVIDENCE:

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY,

1911.

AN INCIDENT IN THE BATTLE OF MIDDLEBURG.

As an Introductory to this "Personal Narrative,"

[This narrative written by Charles O. Green, Troop M, First Rhode Island Cavalry, giving his experiences while taking a message, June 17, 1863, from Col. Alfred N. Duflie, then near Middleburg, Va., to General Kilpatrick's headquarters, at Aldie, Virginia, five miles east of Middleburg, belongs to and should have been a part of "Personal Narratives, Fourth Series, No. 4," but was not received by Captain George N. Bliss, until about ten years after that "Personal Narrative" was printed. Because of its interesting and vital character it is printed as a separate "Personal Narrative."]

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"Early in the morning of June 17, 1863, the following order was received:

"Col. A. N. Duflie, First Rhode Island Cavalry:

"You will proceed with your regiment from Manassas Junction by the way of Thoroughfare Gap to Middleburg; there you will camp for the night, and command the with

AN INCIDENT IN THE BATTLE OF MIDDLEBURG.

As an Introductory to this "Personal Narrative," of "An Incident in the Battle of Middleburg," the following is taken from "Personal Narratives, Fourth Series, No. 4, First Rhode Island Cavalry at Middleburg, Va., June 17 and 18, 1863," by Capt. George N. Bliss:

"The battle of Bunker Hill was upon the 17th and that of Waterloo on the 18th of June. It was the fortune of the First Rhode Island Cavalry to be in action upon both anniversaries in the year 1863, and the history of the regiment for these two days is one of disaster, but not of dishonor.

"Early in the morning of June 17, 1863, the following order was received:

"*Col. A. N. Duffié, First Rhode Island Cavalry:*

"You will proceed with your regiment from Manassas Junction by the way of Thoroughfare Gap, to Middleburg; there you will camp for the night, and communicate with

the headquarters of the Second Cavalry Brigade. From Middleburg you will proceed to Union; thence to Snickersville; from Snickersville to Percyville; thence to Wheatland, and, passing through Waterford, to Nolan's Ferry, where you will join your brigade.

"The day was bright with sunshine, and the regiment, numbering two hundred and eighty sabres, took the road without a thought of the future. At Thoroughfare Gap privates Duxbury, Lee and Teft, of Company H, were in the advance; Duxbury meets a Confederate cavalry picket, and fires his carbine but misses his enemy, at that time on a full gallop in retreat. A few shots came from the woods, but our skirmishers soon drove the pickets back upon a larger force. "There are six hundred of them, I think," said Duxbury to Captain Chase; "There are at least twice as many as there are of us." In the skirmish three of our horses were killed and several horses were wounded, but none of the troopers were hit. Having passed through the Gap and reached the desired road, Duffié turned to the right and pressed forward towards Middleburg, some fifteen miles away. In thus obeying orders, Duffié left be-

hind him W. H. F. Lee's brigade, under command of Col. J. R. Chambliss, estimated as twelve hundred men, while at Aldie Gap, fifteen miles further north in the mountain range, now enclosing the Rhode Island troops on the east, Fitz Lee's Brigade consisting of the First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Virginia, were that day to hold their position against our entire cavalry corps under command of General Pleasanton. General Robertson's brigade, over a thousand strong, was at Rector's Cross Roads, eight miles west of Middleburg, in which town General Stuart, commanding these three Confederate brigades of cavalry, was enjoying the hospitality of his friends, protected only by a body guard of three companies. At 4 p. m. the First Rhode Island struck Stuart's pickets, and at once charged them, driving Stuart and his staff out of Middleburg on the gallop, escaping capture only by reason of the superior speed of their fresh horses. At this time Fitz Lee's brigade had been engaged at Aldie, only five miles away, for two hours with Kilpatrick's troopers, holding the Gap against charge after charge of our brave cavalymen. General Stuart thought the force that

had penetrated to the very centre of his troopers must be a large one, and at once sent orders to Robertson's, Fitz Lee's, and W. H. F. Lee's brigades to concentrate upon Middleburg. Duffé has obeyed orders; he is in Middleburg, where he is ordered to remain for the night; he does not know that at Aldie, five miles in his rear, Colonel Munford, commanding Fitz Lee's Brigade, is holding our whole Cavalry Corps at bay. A movement of the First Rhode Island on Aldie would have struck the Confederate rear and changed defeat to victory, but this is imagination, not history, and in accordance with our orders Capt. Frank Allen, with two men, was sent to Aldie with a dispatch for Pleasanton."

Of this latter incident this personal recital is given:

All the surviving comrades of Troop M, First Rhode Island Cavalry, will remember our battle near Middleburg, Va., on the 17th of June, 1863, and will also remember how serious our position became as the day drew to a close; how we appeared to be nearly surrounded by overwhelming numbers of Reb-

CHARLES O. GREEN,
1st R. I. Cav., Troop M.

els, and that our only hope seemed to be to hold our position until darkness put an end to the fighting for the day, and to hope that we might receive reinforcements before the next day's fighting began. About five o'clock in the afternoon (as it seemed to be a last resort), Colonel Duffé said to Captain Allen, "I want you to take a picked company of men and open communications with Kilpatrick, if possible. You will find him somewhere near Aldie Gap." Captain Allen answered, "I do not want a company. Give me two good men, and if I can't get through with them, I can't get through at all." A call was made for volunteers for the perilous undertaking. From those who stepped forward, Captain Allen chose Calvin Claflin and myself. My chum, Charles Danforth, would have been his choice if his horse had been in suitable condition, as we three had been on similar duty before, and understood each other fully. One other fact that caused Captain Allen to choose me was, that a day or two before, my blue jacket got very ragged, and I availed myself of an opportunity to replenish my wardrobe, by confiscating a new gray knit jacket, which outwardly gave me the ap-

pearance of being a very respectable Rebel. We were soon mounted, and, after bidding our comrades good-bye, started in a circuitous route for Aldie. We had not gone more than a mile before we ran into a Rebel picket line. They opened fire on us, which we returned, and, wheeling our horses, started back over the road on which we had just come. But after traveling a short distance we found that the Rebels had not left their picket-line, and were making no pursuit, and so we took another road, having no idea of returning to Middleburg until we had fulfilled our mission. After proceeding a short distance in this direction, we were fired on again, and we saw at once that it would be useless for us to attempt to use the highways, so galloping back, just far enough to be out of sight of the Rebel pickets, we jumped our horses over a low wall, crossed the field and struck into the woods, trusting to our knowledge of the surrounding country, gained by two years of practical experience. We started to make a new route to Aldie. We went through the woods at nearly right angles to the road we had left, until we came to a small stream, and then followed that in the direction which

we supposed led towards Aldie. We traveled along this stream, and, just at dusk, we came to a small opening. Just as we rode into it, three mounted men appeared on the other side. We discovered each other at the same moment, and saw that it was impossible to avoid meeting. We all rode forward until we were within a dozen paces of each other; each man with his revolver in readiness for any emergency. The captain asked them about the battle. They said that Stuart was driven back, and that Kilpatrick held the heights of Aldie. After bidding each other good-night, we obliqued enough so as not to come any nearer each other, and started in the directions we had been going before we met. We kept sharp eyes on them until they were out of sight, and then for fifteen minutes you may be sure we let no grass grow beneath our horses' feet, and to this day I do not know whether they were Union or Rebel.

We were anxious to avoid a collision, as we had a special duty to perform, and possibly they felt the same. That they were suspicious of us is proved by the fact that no questions were asked that would, by their answers, reveal the identity of either party,

and thereby bring on a fight that must have had a fatal ending. We were so evenly matched, with no opportunity for either side to get any advantage over the other that it would have been impossible for either to surrender. It was now quite dark and we had to proceed very carefully. We followed the stream for quite a distance, and finally came in sight of a lot of camp-fires. After riding as near them as we could we halted, and tried by listening to make out what troops they were. Being unable to do this, we decided that it would be unwise to risk all being captured, and it was arranged that one of us should approach near enough to get the desired information, and, on account of my gray jacket, I volunteered to go up and find out what they were, as they seemed to have no pickets on that side of the camp. I rode up until I came to a high wall with the camp-fires on the other side, and hailing them to attract attention I said, "What regiment is that?" They answered, "The Fourth Virginia. What regiment are you 'uns?" I said, "The Second." One of them said, "Come over here." I answered, "I will, as soon as I can find a place to get through this old wall." I

rode back and reported to Captain Allen, and we struck into the woods again. We could see camp-fires all along, showing that there must be a whole brigade of Rebels, at least. The next time we came to the edge of the woods, we saw we were near more camp-fires, and, having no way of knowing whether they were Union or "Secesh," I rode up and inquired, "What regiment are you?" The answer came, "Second." I imitated their Southern drawl as well as I could, and without waiting for them to ask my regiment, said, "Wa'al, I b'long to the Fourth 'nd I'd like to find 'em." They were busy cooking and eating their suppers, and paid very little attention to me. I rode far enough to see that there was a large force of them and then rode back and told the captain that I guessed we were gaining on them, as we had gotten from the Fourth down to the Second.

We struck into the timber once more. After riding about a mile without seeing or hearing any one, except now and then shots along the picket-line away off to the left, the stream we had been following came out into the open land, and we found ourselves in the rear of a large house and outbuildings

always found around Southern homes. Just as we rode up to the rear a party rode away from the front. As soon as they were out of sight I rode around in front, still trusting to my gray jacket to help me through, provided there were other Rebels there. As I got to the front corner I saw an old man and two women just going into the house. I said, "Hullo, there!" They turned, and I rode up and asked them, "Who were all them 'uns that just rode off?" They answered, "They b'long to the Second Virginia; who are you?" I answered, "The Fourth Virginia," and asked them if they knew where it was? They answered by pointing back the way we had come, and the old man said, "Up thar' a good bit." I asked what troops were ahead of us. They said that there were none except some of the Second Virginia, as they were the head of the column, and were all up and down the pike. They said, "Aldie Gap is full of Yanks, and Stuart is goin' to gobble the whole caboodle on 'em to-morrer." I asked how far it was to the Gap. They pointed and said it was a good bit to the pike and a right smart piece to the Gap. Just then Captain Allen and Claflin came up,

and the Captain said, "Have you found out where our regiment is?" I answered, "Yes." Just then one of the women caught sight of their uniforms, and almost shouted, "Oh! you ain't ou'uns, u'ns are Yanks!" We didn't own up to it, but it was impossible to convince them that we belonged to the Fourth Virginia. The captain tried to get some more information, but it was of no use; they thought we were scouts, and, from the way the women seemed to be listening, as if in hopes that a troop of their friends from the Second might come up and that they could see the first big catch of Yanks that Stuart was to make the next day, we decided that it might be unhealthy for us to stop longer. So we bade them good-night and left the place behind us as fast as we could, leaving the road for the fields, as soon as we were out of sight of the house.

After awhile we could hear the patrol on the pike; we left the field and struck into the woods once more and continued to follow our old guide, the stream, until we came to a mill with one of those high mill races, so common in Virginia. Our whole trip had been with the pike on our left, some distance away,

and the stream on our right. We thought that by going behind and below the mill we would be less liable to get mixed up with any Johnnies that might happen to call there for grain. So we turned to the right and crossed the mill race by a little bridge, and went down to the lowland below the mill, which, late as it was, seemed to be running; their trade always being good when there were soldiers around. The captain told me to go in and interview the miller and get what news I could, so I climbed the bank at the back and worked myself along beside the mill until I reached the corner; then, as there was no one in sight, I walked to the door. I looked in very carefully, and as the miller seemed to be alone I stepped back a few paces and commenced whistling "Dixie" and walked boldly in. He merely nodded, showing that he was having plenty of visitors who wore the gray. I told him I wanted a little meal for our horses, and while he was putting it up I asked him if there were many soldiers around there. "Oh, yes," said he, "heaps on 'em. Our troops with Stuart are back there, and plenty of Yanks ahead. But," he added gleefully, "Stuart'el scatter 'em to-morrer,

and if they don't run pretty fast some of 'em 'el get to Richmond 'fore they want ter." I asked him how far it was to the pike. He answered, "Oh, just down thar' whar' it crosses the river." I asked what troops were guarding the bridge. He answered, "None, just at the bridge, but the Second Virginia is guarding the pike on the high land just above the bridge." Just then a darkey boy came in (it seems that after the Rebels fell back the miller had sent the boy across the river to find the cows). The boy said, "Massa, it's no good to hunt for dem cows, fo' de whol' woods is full ob Yanks, more'n a tousen ob dem ober dar huntin' fo' dem cows, en I tink dey got 'em, too." And I imagine, from the twinkle of his eyes, he didn't care if they had. I questioned him, and after getting what information I could, I took my meal and went around the mill and over the mill race bridge again and down the hill to my companions. We divided the meal into three parcels on the ground for the horses. I told the captain what I had learned. He said that he would look out for the horses while they were eating, and that Claflin and myself had better examine the lay of the land

below the mill and see if we could not get across onto the pike without going back onto the high land above the bridge, and thus avoid a possible collision with the Johnnies. We did so, and found that the hard land ran so low that it became a sort of marshy swamp, and that it would be impossible to get through with our horses, and so reported to the captain. At first, he thought that as we were so near the Union lines it might be safer to leave the horses and finish the journey on foot. But if there is anything that a cavalryman hates it is to leave his horse. So, after holding a sort of council-of-war, we decided to make a dash for it, and as the horses had finished their meal and were in good condition, we climbed the hill, recrossed the bridge, leading our horses very carefully, and followed down on the upper side of the stream, until we came to the Aldie pike just above the bridge.

From the high land just above we could hear the confusion of a large camp, and could see the forms of the men against the background of light from their fires. I let down the bars (very carefully you may be sure) and we led our horses out on the pike.

We tightened our girths, and, at a whispered command from the captain, mounted and started at a walk, but with little hope of getting across the bridge without being heard. When we were within a few rods of the bridge we received orders in pretty positive terms to halt, but we were not in a halting mood, and didn't obey worth a cent, but instead put spurs to our horses, and the rattle we made going over the wooden planks must have sounded like a whole troop. The sentries that discovered us fired a few scattering shots, and just as we crossed the bridge we received volleys from the aroused guard and from the bridge to the first angle of the road we had a lively accompaniment of bullets from their pickets, and the bbzz, bbzz, fttt, fttt, pinggg, pinggg did not cause us to slacken our pace. Fortunately for us, the firing party were on such high ground that they overshot their mark. At the same time we heard bugles sounding "boots and saddles," and in the distance could hear the trumpeters sounding a general alarm. A little later we heard the roar of their horses' feet as they galloped over the bridge in quick pursuit. We urged our horses to a gallop, and

as we heard no more of the Rebel troopers we think they did not follow us far, as they probably thought we were a decoy, and were afraid of being led into an ambush. We had galloped along the pike for perhaps a couple of miles without seeing any sign of camp-fires in front of us, when suddenly we received such sharp and positive orders to "Halt!" that had we been recruits we must have taken a header, we stopped so suddenly. We were then ordered to dismount, advance one at a time and give the countersign. As we had no countersign, we advanced one at a time, and, as these men could not believe that there were any Union men in front of them, we had hard work to make them believe that we were not Rebels, and my gray jacket was now doing us as much harm as it had done good in the early part of our journey, and they eyed me with a good deal of suspicion.

We were finally taken from the picket-line over the hill into the valley, where around a good fire we found the picket reserve roasting huge chunks of beef, and although the Captain in charge was a little in doubt as to our being Union men, he told us to help ourselves to meat and then he would send us to

Kilpatrick's headquarters. Our night ride had given us good appetites, and we ate all the beef we wanted, and I believe we had better luck than the darkey boy, and had at last found a part of the miller's cows, and had also proved the truth of the boy's story that the woods were full of Yanks. Clafin said that from present appearances the Yanks would soon be full of cows. They finally made up an escort of eighteen men to take us to Kilpatrick's headquarters. As we started off the captain in charge of the picket said, "Kil will soon find out whether you are Yanks or Rebel spies; if the latter, you will be shot at daybreak, and all that beef you have eaten will have been wasted." And to me he said, "Young man, if you prize that new gray jacket of yours very highly I would advise you that before you go galloping up to another picket-line that you take it off and put it in your pocket, otherwise you may get a hole through it." Late as it was when we reached headquarters, everybody seemed to be up and moving. As was natural, after the excitement of the day, and the anticipation of the morrow, no one felt like sleep, and the appearances were that thanks to

the foraging parties, both men and horses had been enjoying a good feed, and all seemed to be in good spirits. Especially the staff and other officers around headquarters were in such good spirits that one must be pardoned for thinking that the crop of "corn-juice" and "apple-jack" had not been a failure, and that they, at least, had something besides coffee to wash the beef down with. There were plenty of officers there that knew Captain Allen, and we were immediately taken to Kilpatrick and delivered our dispatches to him. They told him that our regiment was surrounded by an overwhelming force, with no possible chance to escape on either side, and that they must have help or be annihilated. But Kilpatrick, after hearing our stories and asking many questions as to what we had seen on our way up finally decided that the danger of falling into a Rebel trap was too much to take in the dark. So Kilpatrick told us to get what rest we could and to be ready to start back with reinforcements at the first signs of daybreak. A better plan for keeping us all awake could hardly have been devised; scarcely an eye was closed during the night.

As every soldier knows, after such days and nights as these sleep is impossible, and we were all glad when day broke and the troops were set in motion. We rode with the advance on the way back, and over a part of the course that we had traveled the night before. We were continually impeded by small parties of Rebels, fallen trees, burned bridges and obstructions of all kinds to prevent our advance, and as I now look back to our trip that night, it seems as if some guiding power more than human, must have guarded us. However, we at last arrived at Middleburg with the reinforcements for which we were sent, but it was too late to be of much use, as the survivors of the old regiment can testify.

APPENDIX.

[Copy.]

WASHINGTON D. C., Aug. 18, 1881.

MY DEAR COMRADES OF THE 1ST N. H. CAVALRY:

Regretting greatly my inability to be present when you relight the old camp-fire, and, around its cheerful glow, fight your battles o'er, it has occurred to me that I could add something to the interest of your reunion by contributing, from the data in my possession, a paper on the affair at Middleburg, Va., in June, 1863, which ended so disastrously to our regiment (then the 1st Rhode Island), but which, in the light of history, reflects no dishonor upon us or our brave Colonel, because of the great odds of the enemy, and the perilous character of the movement required of us. Before venturing to send this paper I consulted my friend Capt. Wyatt, and was assured by him that my comrades would greet such a paper with pleasure.

While spending my summer vacation this year near Snicker's Gap, in the Blue Ridge Mountains, I took a real old cavalry ride of 36 miles one day, visiting Middleburg and Aldie. At the former place I saw the stone walls behind which our carbineers were dismounted and gallantly repulsed three charges of the "Johnnies," also the woods where the main part of the regiment was drawn up ready for a charge, while the skirmish was going on, and where subsequently Sergt. Jim Gage, of Troop K, reported to a rebel officer with his squad, supposing it was our regt. still there, and was summarily "gobbled up."

But I have already taken too much of your time with my own words. My part of this narrative will be merely the collation of reports and items, with possibly an occasional remark of my own.

My information is from official sources, with the addition of a few facts from Gen'l Robertson, of the late Confederate army, who commanded the column attacking us on the night of the 17th, and who now resides in this city, and is a very courteous and genial gentleman.

A little statement of the strength and positions of the rebel cavalry and our own may be of interest, and the accompanying rude sketch will aid in a clear understanding of the latter.

According to the regimental return of May 31, 1863, our regiment numbered 25 officers and 437 enlisted men (aggregate 462), present for duty.

(Col. Duffie calls our number 275.)

The rebel cavalry opposed to us consisted of 3 Brigades, viz.:

Robertson's numbering 1,294 officers and men for duty;

W. H. F. Lee's Brigade of 4 regiments, not less than 800 men;

Fitz Hugh Lee's Brigade of 5 regiments, not less than 1,000 men;

The exact number of these two Brigades I have been unable to ascertain, though I have corresponded with their commanding officers, and examined the regimental returns. The rebel regiments, many of them, were small, but in placing them at 200 men each I am sure I have under estimated their strength.

The position of the rebel cavalry when we reached Middleburg (see sketch) was as follows:

Robertson's Brigade at Rectortown, about 8 miles; Fitz Hugh Lee's Brigade at Aldie, 5 miles; W. H. F. Lee's Brigade at White Plains, about 8 miles.

Gen'l Stuart, in person, with his staff and small pickets at Middleburg. As will be seen by Gen. Stuart's report, which follows, Robertson was present and charged us in the evening, and W. H. F. Lee engaged us the following morning. Gen'l Robertson tells me that he personally saw a part of Fitz Hugh Lee's Brigade at Middleburg on the evening of the 17th, when he attacked us, but the reports of the officers of that brigade do not mention the affair, and I presume they may not have been actively engaged, though my belief is that the portion of our regiment sent out on the Aldie road was captured by a part of this Brigade returning from that place.

In regard to the position of W. H. F. Lee's Brigade, it will be remembered that just after we passed Thoroughfare Gap we had a skirmish with a force on our left flank, in which Bill Glidden, of Company K, had his horse killed. The force here opposed to us was this brigade, and after we passed, it followed some distance in our rear.

But the report of our gallant Colonel and those of the rebel Generals R. E. Lee and J. E. B. Stuart, will best tell the story.

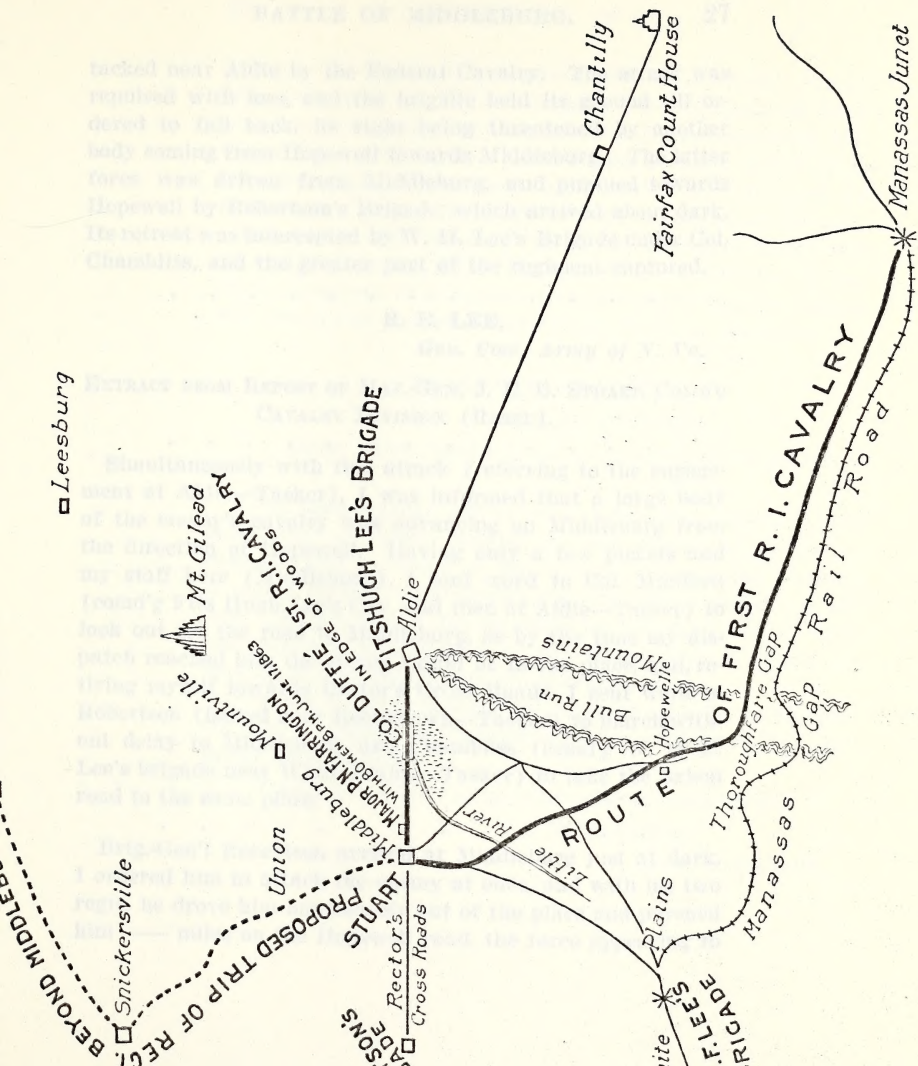
COL. DUFFIE'S REPORT.

(See Report printed in Sabres and Spurs.)

NOTE—Some errors in regard to casualties will be found in Col. Duffie's report, but these arose from the scattering condition of the regiment at the time the report was made.—TASKER.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF GEN'L R. E. LEE, CONFEDERATE STATES ARMY.

On the 17th of June, Fitz Hugh Lee's Brigade, under Col. Munford, which was on the road to Snicker's Gap, was at-



scatter. He captured a standard and 70 prisoners. Chambliss (cond'g W. H. F. Lee's Brigade—T.) approaching from that direction, caught that night and early next morning 100, and several guidons, the Colonel and a small detachment, only, escaping. Horses and equipments were captured in proportion. Among the captured were a number of officers.

Our loss in Robertson's Brigade was slight,—3 killed and 11 wounded, except Major McNeill, 63 N. C. Cavalry, whose wound deprived us of the services of a most valuable officer, and Lieut. Col. Cantwell, 59th N. C. Cavalry, captured.

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Respectfully submitted,

J. E. B. STUART,

Major Gen'l Comd'g Cavalry Army of Northern Va.

From these reports will be seen the perilous nature of the movement we were ordered to undertake, the numbers, strength and positions of the opposing forces, and I think a pretty correct understanding of the whole affair can be had. Should any of the members of the old 1st R. I. have any personal recollections of this engagement I should be pleased if they would furnish them to me.

Trusting that the sketch will not prove wholly uninteresting, and wishing all my former comrades of the cavalry prosperity and happiness,

I have the honor to be your comrade and friend,

A. P. TASKER,

Late of Troop K.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE BATTLE OF MIDDLEBURG.

BY MAJOR P. M. FARRINGTON, FIRST RHODE ISLAND CAVALRY.

When about half way from Manasses to Thoroughfare Gap, Lieut.-Colonel Thompson, who had been riding in front of the regiment with the colonel, slackened his horse as I came along and said, "The colonel wants to see you." I hastened forward expecting to receive orders from him, but he said, "Come in here," pointing to the place by his side, and, as we rode along, the colonel commenced to talk on religion, a subject which he never had mentioned before; I soon saw that he was ill at ease and not at all satisfied with his own belief, as he continued to talk upon the subject for an hour or more, I, giving him what little information I could upon the matter. Seeing my opportunity of riding ahead I said, "I will let Lieutenant Thompson come back." The colonel said, "Come in here," meaning for me to keep my place.

As we reached the Gap and got about half way through, our advance guard started firing; I drove my horse as fast as possible, arriving at the Gap on the further side of which I found our advance having quite a skirmish with a force of the Rebel cavalry. It was evident that the Rebels did not like our men's society, for they were retreating as fast as they could go. As the Rebels had passed out of sight we found three horses had been killed and several wounded. We then turned our horses to the right to the inside road leading towards Middleburg and bringing us out on to the main road; here small parties were scouting and firing upon us from the rear.

Arriving near Middleburg we detailed a strong advance, giving them orders to charge through the place, putting strong pickets at the four corners of the road and holding

the balance of our men in reserve. At the same time we sent pickets out upon the main road. When our advance charged through the town they found a large force of cavalry at the hotel at the corner of the roads; our boys pursued them for some distance, but the cavalry having horses that were fresh were soon out of sight. It was afterwards learned that the party was composed of General Stuart and his staff with a strong body guard.

The remainder of the regiment held an elevated position off the main road, about three-eighths to a half mile from the town. At this time it was just past sundown. Colonel Duffié and Lieut.-Colonel Thompson were sitting on the ground looking down the road and everything seemed quiet, when our pickets at the front were attacked by a large force of cavalry. The cavalry came around and down the upper side of the Aldie road so quickly that our men did not have time to fire upon them, consequently the Rebels knocked down the barricade and were upon our men in what seemed almost like a minute. Our men came back towards the main camp, and then wheeled and charged, driving them back out of sight.

When the shooting was at its worst the colonel said to me, "Major, why don't you go and see what can be done?" Without waiting to answer, I mounted my horse and as fast as he could carry me, reached our boys as they were returning from the chase. A part of them dismounted and began to replace the barricades. We gathered more rails and made the four barricades much stronger than they had been before, and all seemed quiet, with no enemy in sight.

I then returned to camp and found Lieut.-Colonel Thompson sitting in the same spot as when I left. I asked him, "Where is Colonel Duffié?" He said, "I don't know; he went off a few minutes ago."

Feeling tired, hungry and thirsty, I said to the colonel, "I am going to have some bread and milk; will you have some?" I took from my saddle bag two small cups, two spoons, a small can of condensed milk, and some hard tack. Having a canteen of fresh water I thinned the condensed milk and started to break up the hard tack in it. The colonel was deep in thought while breaking up his hard tack in milk. I tried to chaff him by telling him that I did not believe he was brought up on milk, hard tack, etc., but seeing he did not respond to my nonsense, I asked him seriously what the situation was. He answered gloomily: "Major, it looks bad; I think we are surrounded by large forces, and that we are likely to be shot or taken prisoners at any time." Further, he said: "The colonel has received orders to remain here for the night, and will not under any circumstances do anything to the contrary." Drinking about two spoonfuls of milk, he mounted his horse and rode away.

At about this time Colonel Duffié came up and asked me where Thompson was. I told him he had just gone to the rear. Just then the pickets commenced firing again and it was evident that their forces were larger than ever. Immediately the colonel gave me instructions to take my battalion down in the hollow by the road, dismount by the stone-wall and tell my men to tie their horses securely to the trees so they could be found in the dark without any delay, and to be ready to fire as soon as the command was given. Obeying his instructions and posting the men along the stone-wall, I gave the command that all were to fire at once, and to get either the rider or his horse when the word was given. Our pickets were now falling back fast, and, although it was quite dark, we could see that they were very near the coming force. When the head of the charging col-

umn was nearly opposite our left, the word "Fire" was given, and every one of the eighty carbines were discharged; the leading horses and their riders went down instantly; we could not see how many fell in the rear. See account, page 24, *History First Rhode Island Cavalry*. One of the captains wishing to see the result of the firing went over the wall and found an officer, two men, and three horses dead in the front. Again the Rebels came thundering down; receiving the same reception they retreated, and I ordered a force to go down in the field on the other side of the road. I called Lieutenant Fales and told him to follow the road that would lead him to the edge of the woods, and there he would find Colonel Duffié and his command, and to give him an account of what had happened. Hardly had I given this order when the Rebels came down the third time, but retreated as before. Soon Lieutenant Fales returned and said he was unable to find Colonel Duffié or any of the command; we were quite vexed at such information, but the lieutenant assured us that he rode up and down in front of the woods as instructed and did not see either Colonel Duffié or his command. Believing the colonel to be somewhere about, and with his last words still fresh in my memory, "Fight as long as you think it any use, then draw off your men and I will wait for you at the edge of the woods," I mounted my horse and rode through the woods only to find what Lieutenant Fales had, no trace of the colonel or his command. I immediately returned, and finding Captain Chase gave him orders to remain at the front and mount his men in the form of a column as quietly as possible, then wait until I arrived there. Going back to call the rest of the men, I heard a dismounted force coming in the field a short distance away. Our men being mounted, we moved

quietly out into the open, and finding no one there we rode in a southeasterly direction until we came to a road. Following this road for more than a half mile we could hear the babbling of a brook on our left, and, dismounting, led our horses back about one hundred yards, where we found a comparatively level place. I had the boys unsaddle and tie their horses, and told them to make themselves as comfortable as possible.

My spare horse with all my food, blankets, bedding, and servant were at headquarters. Taking my saddle for a pillow, my poncho for a mattress, my saddle blanket for a coverlet, I went to bed and slept with one eye open until daybreak. Getting up and looking over the camp I found everything peaceful and quiet, but on going down the road towards the brook to get water for the men and horses I saw a brigade of infantry moving rapidly down towards Aldie very stealthily. I rushed back to Captain Gould, told him to wake every man and give them orders to take their saddles and other equipment and lead their horses back up the hill, keeping a little to the right of the opening. Within five minutes all the men were up and on the summit and ready for business. We found the hill descended very sharply, and within two hundred feet there was quite a stream of water flowing down in the hollow. In this hollow the men saddled their horses and were ready to mount at the word. Looking through the underbush I could see that there were as many as a squadron of the enemy's cavalry, if not more. Returning, I took a man and placed him by a heavy growth of young chestnut trees as a picket, and another picket to guard the way we came in. The men being thirsty crawled snake-like fashion down to the brook with their canteens to get a drink of water. The horses be-

ing hungry started to pull at the dry grass, but they made so much noise snorting at the dust as they pulled the grass up, that the pickets said that the Rebels under the bluff heard them and would be coming up to find out where the noise was coming from. One man came so near that he could have put his carbine through the bushes and reached us very easily, but as everyone kept quiet he retreated down the bluff; we decided to tie the horses' heads up so high that they could not reach the grass.

We remained here until about one o'clock p. m., and as the men were anxious to get away we gave them orders to mount their horses, but told them that if they started to get away it meant either death or capture, and told them if they would wait until the Rebels charged them they might have a chance to escape. Thinking it over they came to the conclusion they would follow my advice and wait, so they dismounted and tried to make themselves as comfortable as possible. About three o'clock one of the pickets from the bluff came in and said the cavalry force under the bluff was moving out; every man mounted his horse as quickly as possible and moved out onto the road over which we had traveled the night before. The Johnnies had swung around to cut across to the Aldie Pike.

About a mile or so from the starting point on a hill off the road we discovered a picket, but as we could not decide upon his color, we thought it best not to molest him as he did not trouble us. We pushed on as fast as we could about four miles, keeping the distance by the pace of our horses, until we came to a square frame house with a large barn, outbuildings and well-kept gardens, evidently the home of some rich farmer. In the garden we saw a colored boy, and asked him if his master was at home. He replied that

his master, son, and servant had gone to the fight. We asked about the roads and he told us to keep on the road straight ahead and we would be all right, but that if we turned to the left we would go right into Stuart's cavalry. For fear we would go astray he said he was willing to go with us, provided I should command him to do so; I gave him the command and he lead the way. We soon struck the mountain road and arriving at the top and crossing the road the boy said he would have to go back now as he would be shot if he went any further, and that he did not think he cared to be shot just then. About two miles further down the road we came to a small, weather-beaten frame house standing close to the road, with a little woodshed and henhouse in the rear. Going up to the house we found a man and woman about sixty-five years old, and asked them if they had seen any men of either army passing that way. They said they had seen a few of each army pass by. I further questioned the man about the fight at Aldie. He said some of the soldiers said that Stuart had been driven back, and that the Union Army had possession of the place. He was known as a Union man, and said, "If I go out I would be shot as quickly as the secesh would shoot one of you 'uns." While we were talking to the man the woman was hustling around and brought out some cold chicken and corn pone, and everything she could pick up. She said she did not have much to eat and did not know when they could get any more, as the rich farmers were so selfish they would not sell them anything, so they had to go quite a distance to get what little they had to eat. I told her that our men had their rations with them and would not starve, and persuaded her to keep what little food she had for herself and husband. She said she would rather starve than to see any man fight-

ing for the Union go hungry. Believing the woman would give away every morsel she had to eat I ordered an advance. We moved on rapidly, nothing happening until we struck Centreville, and as we were coming out on the main road an officer halted us and asked what regiment we belonged to; on being told he said, pointing to the southeast, "You will find some of your men over there." Following his instructions we found Lieut.-Colonel Thompson and a few men, and tried to make ourselves comfortable for the night. The next morning we started with Lieut.-Colonel Thompson and eighty men for Alexandria, and reached there in the afternoon. On our arrival we found a camp had been laid out and a headquarters tent pitched under command of Lieutenant Wyatt. As soon as Lieutenant Wyatt saw us coming he mounted his horse, and, hat in hand, rode to meet us, and in his usual hearty and enthusiastic manner, he said to Lieut.-Colonel Thompson, "Great God!" See page 237, 238, 239, *History First Rhode Island Cavalry*, for list of casualties.

COMMENTS BY CAPT. GEORGE N. BLISS.

The loss of the First Rhode Island Cavalry is given in *Sabres and Spurs*, page 239 as killed, 5; wounded, 20; missing, 210. Of the 210 missing only about 170 went to Richmond, the others escaped and reached our lines making total loss June 17 and 18, 1863, of 196.

General Stuart's report says "Our loss in Robertson's brigade was slight: 3 killed and 11 wounded, except Major McNeill, 63d N. C. Cavalry, whose wound deprived us of the services of a most valuable officer, and Lieut.-Col. Cantwell, 59th N. C. Cavalry, captured,"

Second series, No. 15, page 9, Lieut. James M. Fales, says, "We were marched into Middleburg and on the way passed the stonewall where we were fighting the night before. As near as I could judge, in marching rapidly by, between forty and fifty horses were lying there dead, showing the fatal aim of our men. In Middleburg we saw about forty rebel cavalrymen lying dead on the piazza of the hotel with wreaths of flowers on their breasts. These men, as we supposed were killed by us in the fight of the previous evening."

Lieut.-Col. John M. Thompson wrote me, see 4th series, No. 4, page 48, "I don't know how I can assist you about your Middleburg history. Colonel Duffié was sometimes communicative and sometimes and about some matters very reticent. I remember only in a very general way what he said to me about the affair. I know there was not the most cordial feeling between him and the controlling officers in the cavalry, and his orders to keep so far west of the main body were regarded by him as an effort to get rid of him, by having his regiment captured or lost, or by his own mistakes in executing his very difficult and very remarkable orders."

No reason has ever been given for the issue of this "very remarkable order," and no good excuse has ever been given for not sending aid to the First Rhode Island Cavalry only five miles away when at nine P. M. June 17, Captain Allen and his brave comrades gave Col. Duffié's message to General Kilpatrick. If Sheridan or Custer had received such a message, troops would have been sent promptly that starlight June night and the First Rhode Island Cavalry would have been saved from disaster.

38 AN INCIDENT IN THE BATTLE OF MIDDLEBURG.

See Fourth Series, No. 4, page 38:

THE MEADOWS IN ABINGDON, VA., April 26, 1884.

Gen'l Thos. T. Munford :

DEAR SIR: In reply to yours will state that the orders I carried you from Gen. J. E. B. Stuart were delivered under difficulties that vividly recall them. He and staff were very unceremoniously driven out of Middleburg by the sudden and unexpected approach of a large body of Federal Cavalry. Shortly afterwards General Stuart called me and gave the following orders: "Go back and find Munford about Aldie, explain matters, and order him to fall back immediately and join me as best he can at Rector's Cross Roads to night." Less than an hour afterwards these orders were given you at Aldie, and as I remember quite late in the evening.

I found you sharply engaged, but recall no impression of the enemy's pressing or having anything to do with your falling back, which, of course, immediately followed my orders from Stuart.

Yours very truly,

FRANK S. ROBERTSON.

Duffié had obeyed orders Captain Allen and his two cavalrymen had reached General Kilpatrick's headquarters at 9 P. M., and if at 11 P. M. the cavalry corps had pressed forward the First Rhode Island Cavalry would have been saved, but Duffié was appointed brigadier-general to date from June 17, 1863.

Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society
of Rhode Island

Personal Narratives

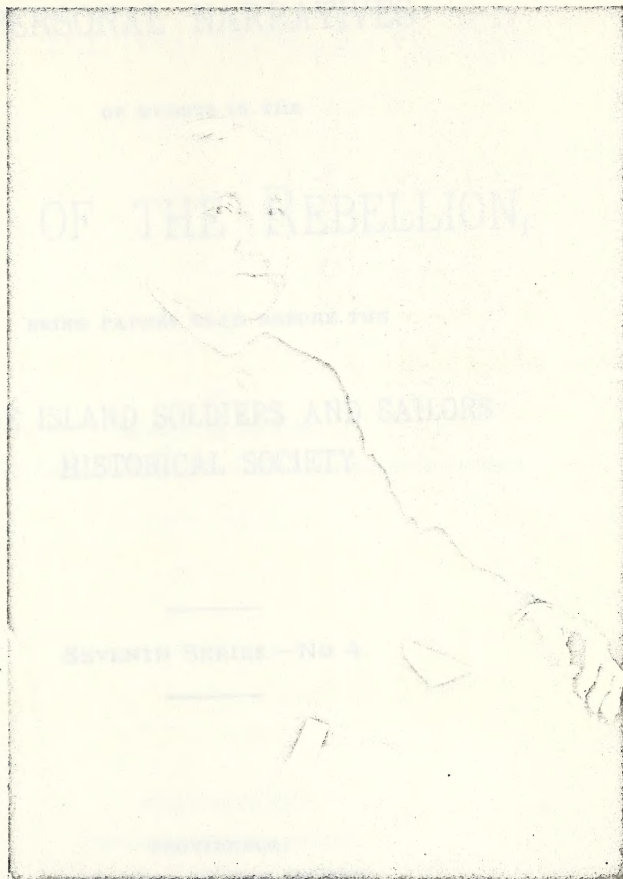
SEVENTH SERIES, No. 4

War Reminiscences.

By MARTIN S. JAMES,

[Late Captain Light Battery C, Third Rhode Island

[Late Cavalry Heavy Artillery], 1st Rhode Island Heavy Artillery.]



CAPT. MARTIN S. JAMES,

[Late Captain Light Battery C, Third Rhode Island Heavy Artillery.]

PERSONAL NARRATIVES
OF EVENTS IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION,

BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE

RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

SEVENTH SERIES.—No. 4.

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY,
1911.

WAR REMINISCENCES.

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1911.

WAR REMINISCENCES.

[Read before the Soldiers' and Sailors' Historical Society
of Rhode Island during Winter, 1908 and 1909.]

The Publication Committee had intended to ask Captain James to add some other reminiscences to this paper, but before we could communicate with him his death changed our plans and so we have published the paper just as it came to us from him.

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE.

WAR REMINISCENCES.

When the War of the Rebellion commenced I was salesman for Lippitt & Martin, on Westminster Street, Providence, R. I. At the first call for troops for three months' service, I, with some of my companions, went to the armory of the First Light Infantry, intending to enlist with them. I made some inquiry of the captain and received such a reply as to make me angry. I said to my companions, "If you want to go out with such a man you can, I won't."

When the call came for the Second Regiment from Rhode Island, it was first published on Saturday morning. As I entered the store that morning, and as I passed the cashier's desk, Henry H. Young, the cashier, said to me something about going with the army. I made some reply and passed on to my department. During the day Young came to me and said he was in earnest and wanted to talk with me.

The store closed at sundown, except on Saturdays, when we kept open until eight or nine o'clock. Young and myself agreed to meet as soon as we closed the store. We went together over into what was known as the "Providence Cove Park," near the Providence Depot. We sat down on one of the iron benches and discussed the matter until nearly midnight. Young said that he could hire a horse and chaise (an old-fashioned two-wheeled chaise) for one dollar a day from a neighbor. It was agreed that Young should come with the chaise to my room, No. 8 Angell Street, at half-past five the next morning. He came as agreed, and we drove, I think, to Pawtucket, and there got our breakfast. We then went to Valley Falls. While the church bells were ringing and the good people of Valley Falls were wending their way to church, I was standing up in the chaise, haranguing a crowd of two or three hundred factory men and boys, while Young was taking the names of those who agreed to enlist. We obtained over sixty names at Valley Falls, and while there we heard of a Captain Tate, of Lime Rock, who had started to organize a company and had about twenty-

five names. We decided to see Captain Tate. We drove to Lime Rock and sent for Captain Tate to come to the hotel. Captain Tate had formerly belonged to the "Boston Fusileers." We proposed to join with him; our offer was accepted and it was agreed that he should have the captaincy, and Young and myself the two lieutenancies. It was also agreed that Young and myself should make a tender of the company to the State the next morning. We offered the State, early Monday morning, a full company for the Second Regiment. The fact that two boys (we were each twenty years old) should enlist a company in one day and make a tender of it to the State created quite a sensation. Mayor Rodman and other prominent citizens took a great interest in what we had done. The governor agreed that no matter what was offered for the Second Regiment, our company should be accepted and officered as requested by us. While at Valley Falls we had made an appointment to meet on the next Tuesday evening the men who had enlisted. Young and myself drove out to Valley Falls. We secured an empty school building for drill, also the services of a man who had been

sergeant in the English army to drill the men. We appointed Tuesday and Friday evenings for drill.

Everything looked bright and promising. For some reason there was a very long delay between the first call for the regiment and the final call for organization. I think it was several weeks. Young was a very quiet, reticent young man, therefore I had to do all the talking. We went out each Tuesday and Friday, and I usually made a speech to the men, telling them we expected the final call right away. After a few of these speeches we began to notice a strong dissatisfaction among the men. We could hear such remarks as, "Damned city snobs," "They are fooling us," etc. At each meeting the dissatisfaction grew stronger, and threats of riding us on a rail, tarring and feathering us, etc., were indulged in. The last Tuesday evening we went out to Valley Falls the men were so rough and boisterous that we had difficulty in getting them to drill or listen to any more promises on our part. Going home that night, Young and myself were very dubious about returning among them again unless we had favorable news from the State; but we decided we would not make

good soliders if we were driven off by a lot of factory men and boys; so when Friday night came we went again with the old horse and chaise, but we took the precaution to hide our conveyance at the edge of the village under an empty shed we found there. We walked up to the drill room. It was a clear and beautiful moonlight night. The moment we came in sight we were greeted with yells: "Here are the damned city snobs! Let's tar and feather them!" We managed to get into the drill room, but the men would not come in nor would they listen to anything. The only ones in the drill room were the drill master, Young and myself. The men were outside yelling like demons for us to come out and take a ride on a rail, etc. It looked mighty blue for Young and myself, and as though we wouldn't escape pretty rough handling. We held a council of war. The building stood on rising ground and at the rear was a small hill. It was finally decided that Young should get out of the rear window, go for the horse and chaise as quickly as he could, drive as near the front door as possible and I was to take my chance of getting into the chaise.

The men were all out in front of the building yelling like Indians. They didn't see Young get away from the building. I watched out of a side window, and pretty soon I saw Young coming on a keen gallop. I had on a light spring overcoat. I buttoned up my undercoat and overcoat, and just as Young reached the edge of the crowd outside, I appeared at the front door. The moment I got in sight of the crowd I tore open my overcoat, undercoat and vest, and thrust my hand into an inside vest pocket. A yell went up from those nearest the steps, "Look out he's got a pistol!" We were both unarmed. Young drove through the rabble right to the front door. I made a spring for the chaise, and as I jumped in I grabbed the reins and whip and we were quickly outside of the crowd, but were not quick enough to escape a shower of stones. I have forgotten how much it cost Young and myself for repairs to the chaise, but I know it was quite a sum.

The next Saturday night the call from Washington was flashed over the wires. Nineteen companies were offered for the Second Regiment, and regardless of promises made by the governor, it was decided to

accept them *pro rata*, that is, to make up the companies *pro rata* out of the nineteen. Our friends were indignant. I was taken ill at about that time and was confined to my boarding house. Mayor Rodman and others took up our case, and Young was commissioned second lieutenant in the regiment. Probably had I not been ill, I would have received a commission. I could not even see the regiment when it marched away as I was flat on my back.

One word about Young. He made a gallant officer and achieved a brilliant record. He was promoted to a captaincy, and finally became chief of scouts to General Sheridan, rising to the rank of lieutenant-colonel. A braver officer never lived. Sheridan, in his memoirs, gives him high praise. I never met Young again until the close of the war, when I visited him in his camp near Petersburg. He afterwards spent a day with me in my camp. Young was afterwards murdered in Mexico. He urged me very hard to go to Mexico with him. He was a gallant fellow and I have always deeply regretted his death.

As soon as I was able I returned to the store, but the spirit of war had got hold of me and I made up

my mind to go with the next regiment. In the meantime I joined the Providence Cadets, and what little knowledge I gained while with the cadets comprised my entire military knowledge.

The *Providence Journal* always lay on the counter near the cashier's desk, and I was in the habit of glancing at the news every morning when I came to the store. One morning in July, 1861, I picked up the paper and saw the call for the Third Regiment from Rhode Island. I waited until Mr. Lippitt came into the store, when I stepped up to him and said: "Mr. Lippitt, I suppose you are willing to sacrifice my services for the good of the country." He said, "Oh, yes," but I learned afterwards that he had no idea of what I meant. I got my hat and went direct to the governor's office. Governor Sprague was in the field with the First Regiment, and the lieutenant-governor was in charge. I started to tell him who I was, when he stopped me, saying, "Mr. James, I know all about you and what you have done; now I want you to take right hold and organize another company." I told him I had no means of so doing, but he insisted that I must. I finally said I would see

Colonel Earle of the Cadets, and if I could have the cadet armory I would try it.

I called on Colonel Earle and told him what I wanted. He said he was very sorry, but he had promised all enlistments in Cadet Armory to Major Gorham. I then asked if he would have any objections to any arrangements I could make with Major Gorham. He said, "Not in the least." I then hunted up Major Gorham and said to him, "If you will allow me to enlist a company in Cadet Armory, I'll do all the work and you can have all the pay and emoluments from the State. He at once accepted, so in less than two hours from the time I left the store I had a placard hanging out in front of the armory on North Main Street, "Recruits wanted for the Third Regiment."

My first enlistment was a man named Kaufman. He was very drunk at the time, but he made a good soldier. I told Kaufman after he had signed to go out and bring in his friends and any others he could get. I did this with all who signed at first. In a very short time I had a full company. I then commenced to drill them without arms. I would study

tactics at night and drill the men day times. I had a fine body of men and they drilled well.

During the winter of 1862 and 1863, while I was aide-de-camp to General Terry, and while we were at Hilton Head, I went to tea one evening and found the general in a very depressed condition. He would say but little, but said he would like to see me after tea. This set me to thinking, and I wondered what I had been doing. I could think of no special act of mine that would cause him to be so glum. As we got up from tea, he proposed a walk on the beach and so we started out. After walking some distance the general turned to me, and said, "James, I have a very sad duty to perform." I asked him what it was, and he said he was charged with carrying out the sentence of death on Private Lunt, of the Ninth Maine Regiment, who had just been sentenced to be shot to death by a court-martial for desertion and other crimes. It was such a relief to me that I could not help laughing. I said to the general, that while it was a sad duty, it was one of the fortunes of war, and I didn't see why he should feel so badly over it. The next morning the

general and myself took our horses and went out to look for a place to carry out the execution. It is an old army superstition, a simple idea, that an execution shall not be held on ground where troops are likely to camp. We finally selected a beautiful field just outside the center sally port of the line of fortifications. Pretty soon the general was pacing off ground away down through a hedge into another field. I asked him what he was doing that for. He said that he was going to place the troops in one straight line. I said that I supposed an execution like this was formed three sides of a square. The general admitted that it was the usual custom, but he thought it was cruel and wrong, and he was going to have it the other way. We had quite an argument. I maintained that an execution was intended to be a warning to the soldiers, and I thought it should be as impressive as possible. We returned that day without making any positive decision, except that the execution should take place on the field above mentioned. The next morning the general and myself rode out to the ground again, and we had the same controversy as the day before.

While we were on the ground, Colonel Metcalf, of my regiment (Colonel Metcalf succeeded Colonel Brown), came along. The general remarked to Colonel Metcalf what we were discussing, and the colonel sided with me. While the general was away for a moment the colonel said to me, "Stick to it, you are right." The general and the rest of us talked the matter over for some time. Finally, we started back. We were just inside of the sally port when the general turned suddenly to me, and said: "James, I place the formation of the troops entirely in your hands; form them as you think best." The execution was to take place the next day. I was then twenty-one years old and was to have the formation of five thousand troops. I can assure you that it put me on my mettle after all the discussion we had had to have the whole responsibility placed in my hands. It was not only a compliment, but quite a responsibility.

The day came. It was a perfect day without a cloud; just one of the perfect Southern winter days. The troops were ordered to report at sharp nine o'clock at the center sally port. There were nearly

five thousand infantry and one battery of artillery and one squadron of cavalry. I placed a guidon at one point and took trees in the distance for my alignment. I formed three sides of a square and was very successful in getting a perfect alignment. Strict orders had been issued that none but the troops and the general and his staff should be allowed outside either sally port that morning. At a little before ten o'clock the general, accompanied by some forty officers, rode through the sally port. There were a number of naval officers, members of the department staff, and other officers, whose only chance to attend the execution was by accompanying the general as staff officers. As the general rode into the center of the square, I presented arms by the troops. I turned and saluted, and my duty was at an end. I then took my position by the side of the general. The general brought the troops to a carry arms, marched the rear rank eight paces to the rear, then faced the front rank to the rear, which left the whole command in two ranks in open order. In a few moments the sound of muffled drums was heard, and through the sally port came the prisoner. He

was in an ambulance with the curtains rolled up on each side, sitting on his coffin. There was a funeral party in front, and the guard on the sides, all with reversed arms. In fact, the poor fellow was going to his own funeral alive. The ambulance and funeral party entered at the left of the line, and passed between the whole command with muffled drums beating and arms reversed. They came out at the right of the line and proceeded into the center of the square, facing the shooting party. The shooting party consisted of twelve men under the command of the provost marshal. Out of the twelve muskets, which are loaded by some officer, only eleven have a ball cartridge—one is loaded with powder only. The twelve muskets are all mixed up and distributed to the twelve men. No one knows which one has the musket without the ball. The prisoner was taken from the ambulance, the death warrant was read to him, and he was asked if he had anything to say. He said he had nothing to say, and at the same time turning to the shooting party, he said, "Boys, shoot right here," at the same time putting his hand over his heart. The provost marshal

stepped out to blindfold the prisoner, but he requested that he should not be blindfolded. He stepped forward and kneeled on his coffin. He was over six feet in height and a splendid specimen of physical manhood. His nerve was wonderful. I was just in rear of the shooting party, and I could not notice a single bit of tremor or weakness. The command, "Ready, aim," was given by the provost marshal, and the signal to fire was given by the dropping of a handkerchief. Eleven musket balls struck him but none of them struck his heart, but all around it. The force of the balls threw him back a little, but he fell on his face. In case death is not instantaneous it is the duty of the provost marshal to use a pistol. I am under the impression that the provost marshal fired a shot into his head, but I do not remember positively. As soon as the execution was over the general dismissed the troops. Then the general with all the staff that had accompanied him started to return. I took my position just to the left of the general. After passing through the sallyport we came to an open space near a large powder magazine. The general reined

in his horse, and as soon as all halted and he had their attention, the general removed his hat, and turning to me, said: "Mr. James, very handsomely done; I thank you, sir." It was a sad scene, but it passed off without a single occurrence out of the usual course. I have stated all these circumstances as it was one of the important events of my career in the army, and as it gives you an idea of how an execution is conducted, or rather, how one such event was carried out.

One morning I established my forge for shoeing horses in a clump of small trees just off the main road that led to our works at Bermuda Hundreds. There were a good many horses to be shod. I had gone into camp in the field opposite. My men had been at work but a little while when an orderly came to me and said, "General Ames requests that there be less noise in your camp." In a short time he came again, and finally the third time. I had been watching and there was no unnecessary noise; in fact, hardly any noise at all. When the orderly came the third time, I said, "I will see the general." I had heard of General Ames (afterwards the war gov-

error of Mississippi). He had the reputation of being quite a martinet. I went to his tent, which was but a little way from the forge. I introduced myself and said that I had received several messages regarding noise in my camp; that, when I set up my forge I was not aware his quarters were so near; that I was shoeing horses, and there was no more noise than was necessary in such work, but that I would move my forge. The general spoke up quick and said: "You will do nothing of the kind. There is no noise; I am nervous this morning, I guess. Say no more about it." This was my first interview with General Ames. We had quite a conversation. The next morning an orderly came with General Ames' compliments, and said that the general would like to see me. I went to his tent. He greeted me very cordially, and said: "Captain, I am going out to Port Walthall Junction with my division, and I have selected you as my chief of artillery." I thanked him for the compliment, and said that unfortunately I could not serve, as the captain of a New York battery outranked me. "Oh, that has all been arranged," the general said. "That battery

has been sent elsewhere." There was then no getting out of it. All the objection I had was that there were two regular batteries under command of lieutenants attached to his division and I hated to command regulars. The following morning we started for Port Walthall Junction in a rainstorm. It did not rain hard, but for three days and nights it was a steady rain. About noon we reached the Junction. I placed my battery in position near headquarters. The general took a barn for his headquarters, and I took a cornerib, nearly opposite, for mine. My cornerib was a terribly leaky affair. I had on a new pair of boots that were a little tight, and I did not dare to take them off for fear that I could not get them on again. We stayed at this Junction for three full days. I was wet to the skin all the time and could hear the water slosh around in my boots. I never saw a rain so steady, but luckily it was a warm rain. The harnesses were not taken off from the horses while there, and when we watered the horses I sent only a pair from each piece at a time. The enemy were right across a deep ravine in front. Towards evening the general sent

for me and directed that I place a battery after dark at a certain place. It was rather an ugly place, and there was but one company of infantry for support. I knew the regulars would make a fuss if I sent them, so I decided I would send my own battery and bring one of the regular batteries up into my position. Just about dark I was getting the battery ready to move, when the general came out and asked what battery I was sending. I replied: "My own." "Why don't you send one of the other batteries?" he asked. I replied, "To avoid a fuss with the regulars I have decided to send my own battery." The general said, "I want your battery right here. You send one of the other batteries, and if there is anything said send the officer to me." I ordered one of the regular batteries, and there was just the howl I expected. I told the officer to see General Ames, but you can rest assured that he did not do so. It was a very wet, nasty time. I had to get fence rails to put under my guns to keep them out of the mud. There was nothing of special importance that occurred during the three days. The enemy made no attack on us. Late one evening we received orders

to move at three o'clock the next morning and join Butler at Drewry's Bluff. That evening my men killed a cow that had wandered too near the camp. When they learned we were to move they commenced cooking the meat, and before leaving in the morning all the men ate of it. It cleared off that night, and when we started at three o'clock A. M. it was clear with not a breath of air stirring. It was so still as to be oppressive. Some two or three weeks before there had been a cavalry fight near the road we had to march over, and lots of dead horses had been left in the woods. The stench was something fearful. The meat the men had eaten had been cooked before the animal heat was out of it, and when I reached what was known as the half-way house on the Richmond and Petersburg turnpike I had as sick a lot of men as you would care to see. I never saw such vomiting in my life. It was about all I could do to keep from vomiting myself. There was a Pennsylvania regiment drawn up on the road. The colonel and staff sat on their horses. I had no surgeon with my battery at that time, so I asked the colonel if he had a surgeon. He pointed out his

surgeon, and I remember how they all laughed at my description of the condition the men were in and its cause. The surgeon rode down to my men and kindly prescribed something that soon settled their stomachs. About ten o'clock I went into camp in a large open field near the half-way house. It was a relief to the horses to be unharnessed and placed on the picket rope. I took off my boots. I remember calling up some of the officers to look at my feet. Talk about a washerwoman's thumb, it was not a circumstance. We were camped just off the main road leading to the front. That evening Captain Belger, who commanded one of the batteries of the First Rhode Island Light Artillery, passed by with his battery, going into position at the front. I called to him and he rode into my camp and took a drink with me. The next morning he was a prisoner of war in Richmond. I always had a standing order to the guards to call me if anything unusual happened.

At four o'clock the next morning there was very heavy firing at the front. I lay listening to it, when the guard in front of my quarters called me. I

jumped up and dressed. It was the opening of the battle of Drewry's Bluff. I never saw such a fog in my life. It was like looking into a snowbank. I believed there was serious work ahead, so I at once ordered boots and saddles. I had no idea of any defeat, or of our troops being driven back, so I did nothing towards striking camp. I ordered breakfast for the men at once. We couldn't see a rod in any direction. The firing seemed to get heavier and nearer. All the officers of the battery were sitting at the mess table and our coffee had just been handed us, when a staff officer came riding by and yelled to us: "Get to the rear as quick as God will let you. The enemy are right upon us; don't stop for anything." We all sprang into our saddles, leaving everything behind in the way of camp and garrison equipage, even our mess table and our coffee untasted. I took the battery out on to the turnpike and went about three-quarters of a mile to the rear and took position upon a high bluff. The horses had not been watered, so I sent men to hunt water, which they found near by. I then ordered the horses watered, a pair at a time

from each piece. They had finished watering when I received orders to get to the front as quickly as I could. Away I went with six pieces and six caissons at a keen jump and went into position right on my old camp ground. I received orders to shell a piece of woods that was about a thousand yards in front of me with all my power. I poured in percussion shell with all the rapidity we could. After firing some time I received orders to cease firing. I learned that reports came back from the front that the firing had been very effective on the enemy, who were attempting to mass their troops in these woods. I then sent the quartermaster sergeant and a squad of men and recovered all my camp and garrison equipage which I sent to the rear. In a little while I was ordered to open again on the woods. I think I shelled the woods four or five times during the morning. The fog would raise a little at times, and by ten o'clock was all gone. I was under the command of General Ames first, then ordered to report to General Brooks, then to General Baldy Smith, and finally to General Terry. While under command of General Baldy Smith, General Butler rode

down the turnpike to the rear. At that time my battery was right across the turnpike. General Butler was accompanied by his staff, a squadron of cavalry and his big yellow headquarters flag. As he got within about fifty or seventy-five feet of my battery I was sitting on my horse right on the road. He called to me and said: "Captain, I order you to load with canister, and for God's sake fire low." As canister is destructive from the mouth of the piece, and as we had two lines of battle right in front of me, I supposed he simply meant for me to load with canister when it became necessary. I had several stand of canister lying on the ground at the muzzle of each piece, so I simply acknowledged the order by a salute of my hand. The general then spurred his horse forward, and shaking his fist at me repeated the order in exactly the same words as before. He being the commanding officer on the field, I had nothing to do but obey, so I gave the order, "Load with canister for action, load." The general and his party had hardly gotten through the battery when an aid from General Baldy Smith rode up and ordered me to open on the woods again. I

saw General Smith and staff about three hundred feet away, so I said, "I'll see the general." I spurred my horse and rode over to General Smith. I was mad and disgusted, and I said to the general: "I'm loaded with canister by a d—— foolish order." "By whose order?" the general said. I replied, "By General Butler's." I won't attempt to describe what an oath he ripped out. The general asked if I could take it out. I said, "Yes." "Then take it out and open on the woods," he replied. The foregoing incident was published in *Harper's Magazine*, in the Drawer years ago, by whom I do not know, but I have told the story many times. I think it was published in 1884-5 or 6. Up in the Black Hills I told this story to a minister Saturday night, and Sunday morning he repeated it in his sermon, making a very happy illustration. It was Dean Ware, the Episcopal Dean of the Black Hills, who was a very warm friend of mine.

About 11.30 A. M. a four-gun rebel battery of Napoleon guns came out on the turnpike, about one thousand yards from my battery, and opened fire, taking my battery for a target. Their firing was

very poor and did me no harm, but one of the shells went over my battery and into a Connecticut regiment that was in line at the half-way house, killing and wounding three or four men. I was then under General Terry, having been ordered to report to him just before. I was waiting for orders to open on this rebel battery, when General Terry rode up, and raising his hat, said, "Captain, can you silence that battery?" I had been looking the ground over, and just about an eighth of a mile to the right inside our lines there was a point of land that was high and would give me an excellent position. I replied, "General, if I could take my four rifles (I then had four three-inch rifles and two howitzers) on to that point (indicating it), I think I could." The general looked at it for a moment, and said: "Very good, take it." I then went flying with the four pieces. I went into battery, gave the gunners the elevation, and for a few minutes we fired with all our might. The first shell went right into the rebel battery and knocked over some horses. I don't think it was over three minutes from the time I opened when the rebel battery limbered up and went to the rear on a

run. Our whole army cheered. I then limbered up and went back to my old position. General Terry rode up, and bringing his hat down to his side, said: "Very handsomely done, Captain, very handsomely done. I thank you." The captain felt good. It really was a very pretty thing and well done. Our army had been roughly handled. We were badly beaten and driven back out of all our works. About two o'clock orders were given to retreat to our works at Bermuda Hundreds. I see by the records that the losses on both sides in this engagement, in killed, wounded and missing are said to be over ten thousand. I have given you a full account of this battle, as I think it was the heaviest fight I was in in the open field, although it wasn't nearly as hot a fight as Pocatigo, but there was a very much larger number engaged. We retreated in pretty good order. There was a captain of a Maine regiment whom I knew, and I saw him that day lying on a bank beside the road. I asked him what he was doing there, and he said he was sick. A few days after I happened to be riding and I saw a regiment drawn up in line as if for dress parade.

As it was not the right time for dress parade, I rode up to see what was going on, and I saw this officer drummed out of the service by order of General Butler. His sword was broken, his straps cut off, and he was marched in front of his regiment, the band playing the "Rogue's March," I presume. I met this officer in St. Louis in 1867 and it was not a pleasant meeting for him. A few days after the battle of Drewry's Bluff, General Terry sent for me. I wondered what was up now and what I had been doing. I went to the general's quarters and he met me with great cordiality. He took me into his private quarters, brought out cigars and I guess a bottle. After some conversation the general said: "By-the-by, James, I heard you had expressed a wish for a battery of Napoleon guns." My reply wasn't pretty, but I'm telling things as I remember them. I said: "General, I don't think that I ever got so drunk that I was willing to exchange my rifles for Napoleons, but I'll tell you what I would like to do. I would like to turn in the two howitzers you captured at Fort Pulaski and get rifles in their places. I've made two or three applications but they were

not approved." The general said, "You make an application now." As soon as I returned to camp I made an application, and at twelve o'clock the next day I had the guns. This made my battery complete, six three-inch rifle guns, the prettiest and best guns I think at that time. I can remember how proud and happy I was over getting these guns. The howitzers were pretty pieces. They were of brass and had the Georgia State coat of arms between the trunnions, but they were very short range and defective in the breech. They sort of spoiled my battery. With six rifles I was ready for any service.

Now I come to the night before the surrender or evacuation of Richmond. For three days I had been in command of the brigade. Captain Langdon, a regular officer, had been down to Norfolk, but he returned the evening before. Had he stayed away twenty-four hours longer I would have been in Richmond several hours earlier and have fired the salute at noon, but of course volunteers had to stand aside for regulars at such a time.

I was up the whole night before. We knew that great events were transpiring but could get no au-

thentic news. I was between the front and General Weitzel's headquarters most of the night. I happened to be looking towards Richmond and saw two explosions, said to be their arsenal and a gunboat. It was a grand sight. Just at the first break of day I saw General Weitzel and a squadron of cavalry go through where the rebel picket lines had been. I just flew to camp, and as I rode into camp I ordered "boots and saddles." In less than one hour we broke winter camp and were on the road for Richmond. At the opening made in the rebel lines I had to wait until a regular battery came, and was only given permission to go ahead on condition that I wouldn't pass it. I marched with the battery until I came right opposite Libby Prison. I halted the battery, and with an orderly I rode into the city. My horse that I had ridden for nearly two years and whom I never knew to trot a step, the moment we struck the pavement struck into a square trot and kept it up until off the pavement. I rode up to the Capitol and rushed upstairs into the Senate chamber. General Weitzel sat in the Speaker's chair. Everybody was wild that day. As I went

in I yelled to the general something. He called out to Major Stevens, "Stevens, gives James some whiskey and stop his mouth." I can see Stevens now, as he came tumbling over the desks and seats with a canteen in his hand. I took the canteen, and holding it up I said, "Here is to the Southern Confederacy." I took a swig and then rushed out and went through the different rooms in the Capitol. I filled my pockets with what I could find. I then rushed back to the Senate chamber, and going up on the platform, I begged with tears in my eyes to fire a salute. The general laughed at me, and said: "You know, Captain, I can't interfere." He then ordered me to come into the city with my battery and go into camp near the fair grounds. I marched through the city, turning every corner, bugles tooting, etc., etc. After going into camp I sat up on a caisson, the only time I ever wrote a letter in that position, and wrote a letter on some of the rebel stationery to my mother. As this is a true story I must own up that it was a little doubtful if I could see as far as the end of the pole, but I have since read the letter and it was pretty good. While I was writing,

an old white-haired rebel came along and, stopping in front of me, said: "Young man, this is a proud day for you, but it's a bitter time for me. All I've got left is my house and a little hay right over there." I yelled out to the quartermaster sergeant: "Here's a man who says he has got some hay. Take some men and go and get it." This was a little mean, but afterwards I did considerable for some of the old citizens, and they seemed to appreciate it, even if it did come from a "Yank." The next morning I received orders to take charge of dismantling all the rebel works on the side of Richmond towards Washington. I was given an officer and one full section from each of the eight batteries, about three hundred officers and men and about two hundred horses. Every afternoon for several days I came through the city of Richmond with a long line of captured artillery. If I remember rightly I parked some three hundred and fifty-seven pieces down on Rickett's wharf. Everything from a four-pounder to a ten-inch Columbiad. It would take a big sheet of paper to tell you of all the fun I had in Richmond. After we had been in Richmond a week or ten days

the artillery brigade was ordered to take position in south of Petersburg and about three miles from the city. Just as we moved, a detail was made for a court-martial, and I was made president. The first morning we were in our new camp the court convened at my quarters. Generally the first session of a court is only preliminary, and nothing much is done. General Ord was in command at Petersburg and had issued stringent orders that only general officers and staffs should be allowed into the city. After we had adjourned court, I turned to the officers and asked them how they would like to go into Petersburg. I said, "If you want to go as my staff and will carry it out in good shape, why, we will try it." All agreed but one officer, who was evidently afraid. In court we have to be in full dress. I put on an old sack coat without shoulder straps, top boots and an old slouch hat. Several of the officers had orderlies and I had mine, and off we started. When we came to the guard around the city I rode a little ahead and my staff trailed on behind. The guard stood at attention. We rode on into the city, and not knowing anything about the place, we

turned a corner which brought us into the public square, and the first thing we heard was the call of the guard, "Turn out the guard, general officer." The guard was a very large one and was under command of a lieutenant-colonel. It took some time to form the guard. Arms were presented. I raised my hat in acknowledgment and we rode on. We went in three times within a few days, but we were careful to avoid the public square. I finally heard that passes were being granted into Petersburg, and I knew General Weitzel would think it strange if I did not apply for one. So one morning, while at headquarters, I said to the general: "I hear they are giving passes into Petersburg. I guess I would like to take a look at the city." I can see the general now as he looked at me and said, "James, you have been in there three times within a week, and if it was any other officer I would court-martial him."

Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society
of Rhode Island

Personal Narratives

SEVENTH SERIES, No. 5

The Sailor on Horseback

By WILLIAM E. MEYER,

PERSONAL NARRATIVES

OF MEMBERS OF THE

WAR OF THE REBELLION,

BEING TESTIMONY READ BEFORE THE

RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

SEVENTH SERIES.—No. 5.

PROVIDENCE:

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THE SAILOR ON HORSEBACK.

[Read before the Authors and Editors Historical Society of
Rhode Island, September 14, 1912.]

BY

WILLIAM E. MEYER,

[Late Corporal Troop A, First Rhode Island Cavalry.]

PROVIDENCE:

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.

1912.

THE SAILOR ON HORSEBACK.

[Read before the Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society of
Rhode Island, January 16, 1912.]

Among the soldiers in the First Rhode Island Cavalry Volunteers, the author of this paper was best known under the name of "Corporal Dutchy." After the war he went back to the sea, and rose to the rank of Captain William E. Meyer. In 1874 he went to Bermuda, where for many years he was German Consul, and is now one of the best-known and most prosperous citizens of St. Georges, Bermuda.

G. N. BLISS,

Chairman Publication Committee.

THE SAILOR ON HORSEBACK.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN had been elected President of the United States in November, 1860. About this time, the hundred-ton centerboard schooner *Harriet Lewis*, of Newport, R. I., lay moored against the river bank in the Alabama River at "Twenty Mile Bluff," twenty miles above Mobile, Alabama. Mr. Ladd owned the plantation and woods, also the saw-mill from which the sawed lumber fresh from the felled trees, was slid down the steep bank into the hatches of the schooner to be taken to Cuba on joint account and risk, one-half profit for the schooner, one-half profit for the owner, Mr. Ladd.

The Captain, Master Williams, and the owner, Mr. Ladd, had absolute trust in each other as to the best market and the fair division of the deal.

I stood by, hurriedly measuring the yellow fragrant pine scantling, and noting in my booklet "21 x

3 x 4," and so on. Close by stood Captain Williams and Mr. Ladd in pleasant conversation. Captain Williams, I should mention, believed like "Marsa Ladd," "That the nigger had no soul to save simply because he had *no* soul," that, nevertheless, a good nigger, like the one who slid the lumber down the bank quickly and carefully to the ship's hatch, was a fine fellow and worth a good thousand dollars, and Mr. Ladd asserted, "he would not take that much for him."

Captain Williams, who had seen the fine slaver yacht *Wanderer* on the Congo in Africa, and who had the reputation of having made several successful "blackbird voyages" from the Congo River himself, declared himself in all honesty, for the Sunny South and for the right of state secession from state; and he, a Rhode Islander. "Indeed," continued Mr. Ladd, "It is very well for your abolitionists to be wanting to free our niggers."

"Did you hear them on the bluff?" said the ship's cook, to the crew of the schooner as they sat round the cabin table at dinner. "I have served ten years in the navy, been 'Captain of the Maintop' in the

old *Constellation*, and it makes me mad to hear such treason talk."

Such were the common discussions outspoken ashore and afloat in 1860. We had sailed for Cuba, arrived with Mr. Ladd's cargo in Cuba, and had loaded molasses for Norfolk, Virginia, to order in Norfolk. Ugly rumors floated about like mist upon a troubled sea, and then the statement that the South would never submit to a "railsplitter." The low, black, raking schooner yacht *Wanderer* was anchored near us in Havana harbor, and it was no great secret that trusty sailor men with courage in them, were wanted on board for some adventure and might get fifty dollars wages in gold to "ship in her." She was reported as an ex-slaver and that her owner was a gentleman from South Carolina, "a red hot Southerner." Our "Doctor," the ship's cook, swore by the "holy jumping jack" that he knew the *Wanderer* well, had chased her more than once, when she had a cargo of "blackbirds" on board of her, and would enjoy the pleasure of hanging any "low-down son of a gun," who would turn pirate, or worse, for the sake of a "vermined fifty dollars" a month.

It was April, 1861, when we sailed into Hampton Roads. It proved but too true, Fort Sumter had fallen, and over it floated a new flag. Our cook called "Doctor," and "Captain of the Maintop," declared for the "Stars and Stripes in one Union." I backed him against the crew of four foreigners who were in for anything that paid the best wages. Captain Williams was non-committal, remarking that he hoped it would blow over.

"Norfolk is in a very unsettled state," reported the naval officer from the United States ship at anchor, "you may go in, but you may not come out again with a whole skin." "Try it, if you want to."

The following morning a steam towboat came out from Norfolk and made fast alongside.

On board was the owner of the molasses cargo; with a letter from the Mayor of Norfolk assuring the master of the *Harriet Lewis* of the Mayor's good promises for us to enter Norfolk and to depart again in peace. War was not existing legally, only mere spasmodic riots and rebellions here and there, which it was hoped would exhaust themselves.

Such was the state of affairs when the good

schooner *Harriet Lewis* of Newport, R. I., was towed into Norfolk, put alongside of Portsmouth wharf where the molasses soon found its way on the dock. In exchange for our sweet cargo we received only sour remarks from the molasses lickers on the wharf.

To me, a boy of eighteen years, with my brave "Man-o'-war's-man" to back me, it seemed exciting chaff and rough fun; and the "Doctor" certainly did fire volleys of red-hot cinders from his square jaws, accompanied by threats of shovelfull of red-hot coals, or scalding hot teakettle water to any "beach comber" who should dare to put his foot on his deck. As usual, as night came on, after having helped the "Doctor" with an armful of nicely chopped wood for the coming breakfast, I retired to my bunk down below by a steep ladder in the bow of the ship. A dark, damp hole it was, where through two leaky bow timber loading ports dripped the water and pingponged into watery pools below. A dirty "slush lamp" with its crude round wick, fed with grease from the "galley," smoked over the four rough sleeping bunks in gloomy flicker. It seemed a God-forsaken place for a human being to live in, but in 1860

it was the sailor's common home on shipboard and in this one forecastle lived three others, whose names were, so far as I can tell you, and the mate and cook can tell you, viz.: 1. "English Bill." 2. "Irish Bill." 3. "Dutch Bill." 4. "Little Bill," to which latter I readily answered. We had of course our real names on the "Ship's articles," as a matter of form only, but these were never used. The mate was called "Mister Brown," the cook was the "Doctor," and Captain Williams was "The Old Man," (by sailors in common).

This same night, "The Old Man," Mr. Brown, and the three "Bills" had all gone ashore on separate invitations from genial company according to the ratings of their respective stations in life and rank on a hundred-ton centerboard American seagoing West Indian fore and after.

The Captain absented himself for days, the mate and crew came and went whenever they liked, to eat and sleep on board, and one fine morning pulled their lashed seamen chests up the companionway on deck of the vessel and departed altogether. The mate also took French leave.

The din of volunteer fire engines alarmed the town of Portsmouth, Va., the home of the great navy yard of "Uncle Sam." Wild crowds, yelling, hooting in mad haste would race with their hand engines from other points; they stopped, connected fire hose and pumped high sprays of sparkling water over trees and housetops, but no fire yet in sight. "Why all the excitement?" "What did it mean?" It meant that the "Devil was let loose in Norfolk," and had crazed the people into madness; beer and liquor flowed freely from the corner rum shops. Drink! Drink! everybody! Free drinks all round. "Hurrah for Jeff Davis!" yelled one. "Hurrah for Jeff Davis!" yelled the crowd. And who was "Jeff Davis?" I wondered.

It was midnight in the latter part of April, 1861, when the navy yard was burning high, where millions of dollars worth of "Uncle Sam's" property went up in flames, the blaze of which could be seen for many miles. The dreadful destruction continued. A body of Virginia state troops entered the city. Two thousand cannons and an immense lot of war material fell into their hands. Law and order had

fled and a mad mob took possession of the ships, navy yard, and of all public property, and threatened to take charge of our "Yankee schooner" now held by the "Doctor" and myself.

When after one awful racking night, cook and I sat together on the galley bench preparing breakfast for ourselves over the cheerful stove, our three dissipated "Bills" appeared on board and informed us in high glee that they had joined the new secession navy, that good jobs were awaiting them at the navy yard, and invited us to be "men" and to come along and join the fortunes of war; and advised us not to sit like fools on board of the *Old Hooker* to be sunk with her in the channel of Norfolk. The Southerners had already decided to sink the *Harriet Lewis* to keep the Yankee warships from coming into Norfolk. Mr. Brown also came swaggering along with a similar story of fortune and promotion, and, soon after, gathering up their "duds" the four made a hasty departure.

"So help me Bob, and blow my bloody eyes, if I don't get even with them four scoundrels for deserting their ship and turning traitors; the first chance

Mr Wm P. Sheffield Esq.

Dear Sir

I think the Pamphlet enclosed
was very interesting, and think
the Mother Ocean mentioned
was the wife of Mr Ocean, a
sister of George Crabbe. The
fisherman who lived on "Pope St"
thanking you for the loan of
the book. I remain

respectfully Yours

R. L. Ocean.

after we get out of this scrape I'll ship if there's a ship left in the navy and I'll see the beach combers hung on the yard-arm, etc.," roared the "Doctor."

Days and nights the excitement continued at Norfolk and Portsmouth; thousands of bales of cotton were piled up hastily for breastworks at Sewall's Point to serve as protection against Northern attacks from the bay. Armed men stacked their rifles behind them, riot ran high, bands of music played martial music, and woe to the man who dared to express an opinion contrary to the general feeling.

I painted over the names of *Harriet Lewis*, of Newport, R. I., on stern and on side quarter boards with dark paint to hide the despised letters of the "Yankee" hailing port and to avoid further aggressively blasphemous remarks and disagreeable missiles falling on side and deck from passing junk and bumboat men.

Junk boatmen and bumboat men in rowing past the *Harriet Lewis* read the hated Yankee hailing port of Newport, R. I., and sent on board curses deep and loud, with occasional disagreeable missiles rattling against the schooner's side and upon her

deck. Fearing more serious harm to our ship, I painted out the objectionable letters on sides and stern for our common better peace and comfort.

Captain Williams, our "old man" turned up at last, looking worn out in body, but his ready tongue streamed out with "Southern Rights," "Nigger War," that "Cotton was King," and that it would be best for the North to let the South secede; that England and France were backing the South, and that a million of Northern men were Southern sympathizers, and would not lift a finger against them.

"The Mayor of Norfolk," he continued, "could not guarantee our safety, but advised that we should get away the best way we could, and make no fuss over it; that some navy officers in hiding had offered to help the schooner and themselves by escaping with her, and would bring their families on board over night." The "Old Man" thereupon retired to his cabin and slept the whole day long. At night the party arrived. The patent roller sheaves were taken out of the throat and peak halyard blocks to prevent their rattling and alarm the neighborhood. Quietly

the sails were hoisted, and, with a fair breeze, we sailed away with the tide and wind, leaving Norfolk miles behind us at daybreak. A bragging cannon shot through our mainsail from the shore battery sent us her last "farewell," and in another hour we had reached Hampton Roads with the Stars and Stripes flying from our main peak. Soon we were on our way to sea and bound for Newport. The schooner's owner, Mr. Thomas Coggeshall, stood at Coggeshall's wharf at Newport and greeted us with delight.

Captain Williams became a "Copperhead." The "Doctor," ex-captain of the maintop, lost no time in making good his promise, joining Uncle Sam's navy at once. But the navy just then had no use for boys, and I was not yet an "A. B." (able seaman).

The army which had already marched south to restore the erring South in short good order, met its disappointment in the first battle of Bull Run. Yes, comrades, you know how they came back, these three months' men. They had done their best against our own poor generalship, and now they stood and told it on street corners how terrible bloodthirsty were the

"Louisiana Tigers" with their bowie knives, and last, but greatest of all, how the famous Black Horse Cavalry of Virginia, mounted by the F. F. V.'s of Virginia had followed up the retreat and mowed our troops with their sabres as hay is mowed with a scythe.

I remember there was W. Keating, alias "The Bold Soldier Boy," who fresh from Bull Run next enlisted in our Troop A, lived throughout all the whole campaigns and then after the war, joined the Fenians who went to Canada to capture it, but made their stay but very short in faithless Canada. "The brave, bold soldier boy" made my heart fairly jump with patriotism and fight to put rebellion down.

"I'll tell yees if we'd only had cavalry, but we had no cavalry; that's where we missed it," he often affirmed.

One day the enlisting officer came to town to look over our twenty-three cavalry volunteers; he drove a nail on the door transom of the fire engine house to measure heights. My sailmaker friend, John Scott, and sailor friend, Pete Wilkie, helped to lift and stretch me to touch this nail. The benevolent official

stood by and grinned at the antics, and passed the "Little Fraud" as an able bodied volunteer cavalryman and I was duly accepted. This happened fifty years ago. My age in April, 1861, was eighteen years.

The day of my acceptance as a Union soldier to fight for freedom and for right, was the proudest day of my life. I shall never forget when in greatest glee I rushed in to dear Mother Oman's house and told her and blushing Annie that I had joined the cavalry, a sailor boy to ride a horse, and on horseback chase the Southern cavalry into the Gulf of Mexico in three short months; then to come home and hang my sabre on the wall and be the hero of the house. When I got my regimentals on and came home in them, Mother Oman laughed herself jolly, exclaiming "Why, Willie, you look like a baby wrapped up in a blanket in that man's overcoat of yours."

The girls came in to look at me, unwrapped me and soon reduced and remodeled my cavalry uniform by half into a fair fit and made me "good to look at."

In March, 1862, our First Rhode Island Cavalry

Battalion reached Virginia and together with their good comrades of the New Hampshire battalion had various experiences beginning with "Warrenton Junction" in April, 1862, and including a good twenty battles and many fights until March, 1863; with another good thirty battles more ending with Appomatox Courthouse, April 9, 1865, with "Little Phil."

The Confederates Ashby, Mosby, Fitzhugh Lee and J. E. B. Stuart with their cavalry were well known to us, and many a "brush" we had with them. "The cavalry kicks up a row, stirs up the enemy and gets us to fight it out," complained the infantry, "and that's all your cavalry are good for." This was not so, for did we not fight through the whole "Second Bull Run" campaign as a rear guard on foot and mounted and saved the Army of General Pope of the Potomac from total disaster?

General Banks, Burnside, Pope and Hooker spared us not in their advances and retreats when the cavalry saved the army more than once. The trouble was that there were not enough of cavalry. The wretched country roads, streams, mountains and

sucking clay soil county of Virginia made necessary more mounted forces for rapid movements, which fact Phil Sheridan fully illustrated in our great successful cavalry raids later on.

The rebel cavalry were ever on the move by day and night, raiding and capturing men and material within our lines, and taking our picket posts by stealth, trickery and treachery.

We had accused the proud Virginians of bushwhacking and of dodging us, so that Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, as fine a Southern cavalier as ever rode a horse, left a challenge paper pinned to a tree to the effect that he would give us a fair, full fight at the first opportunity we offered.

Our cavalry picket found the paper and brought it in, and set us boys to thinking. "I wonder if he really means it?" Some took it so in earnest that the next plantation grindstone was kept turning for days by a fighting lot, to grind their dull sabre points to a point and edge.

Could we face and fight and beat the "Famous Black Horse?" Could we dare to meet men who were almost born on a horse? We, from the cabin

and forecastle, from city office and workshop, could we do it?

THE BATTLE OF KELLY'S FORD.

March 17, 1863.

My certificate of discharge from the Army reads on the back at the bottom of some twenty battles, "Corporal Meyer was particularly distinguished for bravery at the battle of Kelly's Ford, March 17, 1863."

(Signed)

"JOSHUA VOSE,

Captain Commanding the Regiment."

"Kelly's Ford" was a shallow crossing in the Rappahannock River, where, in ordinary dry weather, wagons and horses could cross without having to swim for it. During rains it was impassable; it was about 200 feet across from bank to bank. An old-fashioned flour mill stood on the southern side run by the waters from the river, through a sluice; as I remember there were some other buildings near.

The First Rhode Island Cavalry had crossed this river on previous occasions in their long wanderings

through thick and thin. A road, simply means in Virginia anything with a snake rail fence on either side, without any grade or improvements; such a road led through the ford to Culpepper Courthouse fourteen miles away, where the Southern army had a body of cavalry under Gen. J. E. B. Stuart, encamped. The ford was well protected by rifle-pits fronting the river, guarded by a hundred of the Second Virginia Cavalry on its southern bank, well prepared to stop possible cavalry raids from the north. From here, Gen. Fitzhugh Lee during his campaign used to make his raids upon our Union flanks or in the rear of them, and many a fat Yankee sutler wagon went this way to feast the rebel cavalry at Kelly's Ford during the winter of 1862 and 1863 while our main army encampend in winter quarters on the northern bank of the Rappahannock opposite Fredericksburg, miles below.

Our cavalry had our sore trials on the vidette and picket service in a wooded country; it was almost primeval forests, and a poor place indeed for cavalry. A cavalryman in thick woods does not

count for much, where any man on foot on a dark night can see the body of the horseman against the sky line and sneak upon him unawares, taking advantage of a snow, hail or rainstorm, amidst hooting of owls, crunching of overloaded branches of trees, with the breaking of ice and snow upon them. Then there were wandering wild porkers, razorback pigs, who were born, bred and lived in these woods, rooting, grunting, snapping, and cracking through the underbrush at all times and hours.

How many times my heart has thumped as my horse was allowed by me to find the path to my own next picket, whom I could not make out five feet away, for it was a corporal's duty to change pickets every two hours and see to it himself no matter how dark and dreary, the man on the "post" watching every anxious minute of the two hours for his relief. The corporal's horse gave due alarm of their coming with his horse's feet squashing through the mud, the man on duty afraid to loudly challenge the uncertain comer, would whisper when near by, "Is it you, corporal?" and startle the corporal's heart anew at the unexpected challenge from his chum and picket

nearer to him than he had expected. The lonely picket said to himself, "Was it a pig I heard?" "Yes, I hear it grunt, it is a pig; what a coward I am in my heart to shiver at the noise of a wandering pig."

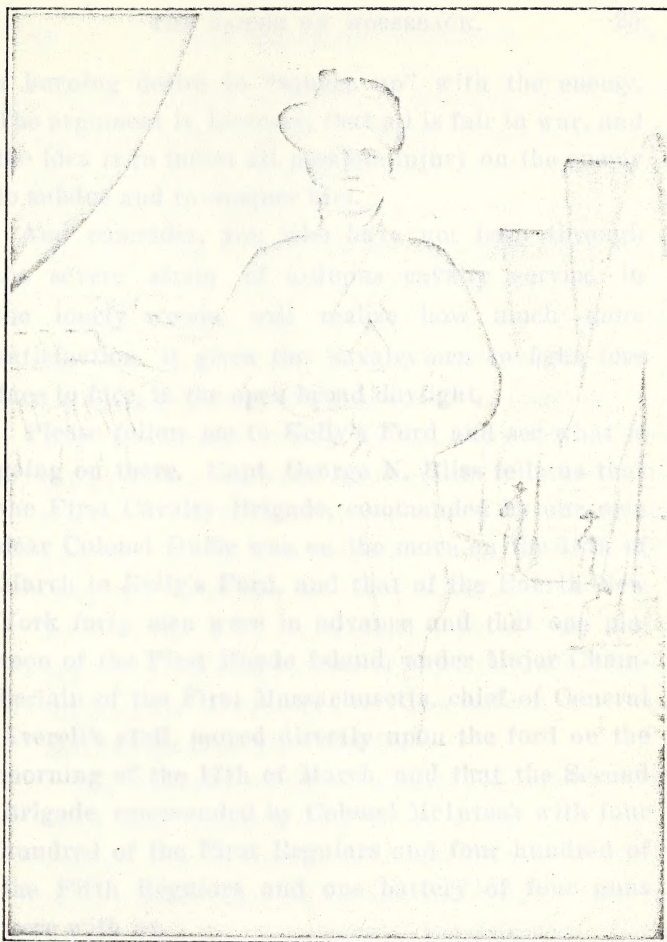
And as the snow and sleet of March went through his wet cold clothes on that cold dark night, he wrapped the overcoat cape around his ears and neck and sat there to suffer and to think of the people at home. He watched there, for the protection of the great army asleep behind him; watched there in misery, yes, and died there to save the Union and to weld the broken bars together again into one strong chain of universal freedom, into a union of one great republic; and then this poor cavalry picket boy's thoughts wandered to his "Home, Sweet Home" and to his sweetheart. When with a sudden savage grip at his horse's bridle and a cold revolver muzzle punched against his ribs, a hoarse whisper challenged him to "Surrender." It was a pig, a pig of a bushwhacker and our picket a prisoner-of-war.

Again, at other dark night rides called "scouts," searching in the night for an unseen enemy on unknown roads and in out-of-the-way places. The ad-

vance guard rides with their carbines full cocked and in position, say fifty or a hundred feet ahead of the scouting party; the sabres are strapped to the saddles to keep them from clanking and in silence and with beating hearts they move on for many miles, until startled by the fierce barking of a hundred yelping curs from some wretched four-corner village of high sounding name, with perhaps twenty log houses, a rickety tavern, and a general store.

Such a place we would rush on a gallop, surround it and pick up a few sleeping Confederates home on a furlough, or on recruiting service, to conscript rebels; then to return in the morning tired, sleepy and bedraggled to our camp of cavalry at winter quarters, which so-called winter quarters were simply a few side logs topped with our cheap table-cloth size shelter tent cloths.

You see, comrades, how easy it was for any man acquainted with the roads and neighborhood, without much danger, if abiding his time, to capture a mounted Yankee; that same man, facing his adversary in broad daylight would stand no equal chance; it was this kidnapping business that our cavalry had



WILLIAM E. MEYER.

Taken at "Camp Mud," near Warrenton Junction, Va., in April, 1862.

Age 19.

a burning desire to "square up" with the enemy. The argument is, however, that all is fair in war, and the idea is to inflict all possible injury on the enemy to subdue and to conquer him.

And comrades, you who have not been through the severe strain of arduous cavalry service in the lonely woods, will realize how much more satisfaction it gives the cavalymen to fight foes face to face, in the open broad daylight.

Please follow me to Kelly's Ford and see what is going on there. Capt. George N. Bliss tells us that the First Cavalry Brigade, commanded by our own dear Colonel Duffie was on the move on the 16th of March to Kelly's Ford, and that of the Fourth New York forty men were in advance and that one platoon of the First Rhode Island, under Major Chamberlain of the First Massachusetts, chief of General Averell's staff, moved directly upon the ford on the morning of the 17th of March, and that the Second Brigade, commanded by Colonel McIntosh with four hundred of the First Regulars and four hundred of the Fifth Regulars and one battery of four guns were with us.

Colonel Duffie gives out in General Order No. 8, that two squadrons of the First Rhode Island Cavalry with the Sixth Ohio of our brigade forced their way over the obstacles and across the river in the face of a most murderous fire, capturing some of the rebels who had been firing across the Rappahannock.

Colonel Duffie reports that there were five to our one, that upon the field of their own choosing we met the famous Fourth Virginia Cavalry, a part of which were the historic Black Horse; supported in their flank and rear by three full regiments, with the dashing Gen. J. E. B. Stuart supreme, and Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, his second best present. So here we had the *creme de la creme*, of the Confederate cavalry, as brave a foe as ever straddled a horse, they had no betters in the South, these F. F. V.'s of old Virginia, idolized and worshipped by the women of the South, and the pride of all Virginia.

The Confederate report denies the superiority of their own numbers and I am willing for sake of average and argument, to concede for them that we were equally matched in men and horses, which still gives them the advantage of the situation in every

other way; the knowledge of the country, the disposition for attack or retreat, their boasted superiority as a fighting body, and last and most important, an impassable obstruction of the northern side of the wagon ford, for after all they had not opened up passage for us, but had blocked the way into the river by having previously felled two heavy trees from either side of the ford so skilfully dropped, that the heavy tops and branches securely interlocked in the center of the ford.

When our advance, the Fourth New York Cavalry, had come along in the early morning to capture the passage, they received a shower of bullets from the opposite shore, and like a sensible body retired to a safe distance and waited for reinforcements; and we soon arrived to realize the fact, that we were not wanted on the other side.

It was easy to call for pioneers with axes and to instruct them to proceed on foot to cut the abatis away, but after an hour of patient waiting on our horses, these pioneers gave up and returned more or less damaged and discouraged. Nothing came of it, and we, in the ranks, sheltered from the ford by a

low ridge heard the officers' dubious remarks. One commander concluded that it was impossible under the circumstances to get across the river without a certain sacrifice.

Colonel Duffie coolly waiting and smoking his cigarette and hearing the expression of his fellow officers, straightened himself up, stared with his piercing dark eyes at his own regiment and angrily cried out, "My boys will go."

"Yes, yes," was our ready reply. Sergeant of Pioneers, Pratt, another pioneer and John A. Medbury rode out from the ranks; I, too, had a sharp, small axe with a long handle for my own use and comfort and carried it strapped on my saddle at which my next man gazed and then looked inquiringly at me. I nodded, then mechanically unstrapped my axe, mechanically dismounted, gave my next man the reins of my horse, also mechanically, and followed my friends closely on foot until I came under the shelter of the intervening ridge. Looking up, I saw upon the river bank the fine figure of Major Chamberlain of the First Massachusetts on horseback, fully exposed to the enemy's fire. "No danger, all right,"

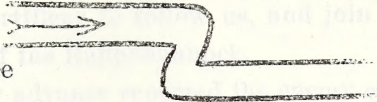
he cheered us on. We poked our heads over the ridge, such a swarm of bullets whizzed by our ears that I fairly tumbled backward for fright.

The fury of firing from both sides redoubled, then with a rush I leaped over the ridge and into the branches of the two felled trees; yes, there was our Sergeant Pratt and John A. Medbury of our regiment and I think two other axe men were there, but no more. I cannot answer for my mates; no doubt they all did their share. I for one was too busy bent upon my work, chopping right and left with my axe. I cannot tell you how long I was about it, several bullets struck my axe flatly and sent it from its course. I kept on, worked on, madly I fought those branches and paid no attention to the rain of bullets whistling by me. I forgot that they were death-dealing missiles. Looking up and back to the bank above, there again I saw Major Chamberlain nodding courage to me. A few more "licks" and I stood beside the major on the bank. "All right, major," I said to him.

Along came the cavalry, the officer in front, stared at the tangle of the trees, shook his head, turned and

with his men turned back in fairly quick time in a squall of bullets. I yelled and hollered, "Come on," "Come on," but, ah, there next come the First Rhode Island boys on the trot; the first one looks ahead and down into the trees and cries, "My God, what's this?" but he never stopped, he has entered the narrow crooked defile, it is our First Lieutenant Simeon Brown. In single file they wormed themselves after him through it, down to the water and now they are in the river, a string of single scattering horsemen in the stream, and all of them our dear Rhode Island boys at that. "Hurrah!" I yelled, wild with excitement, "Come on! come on!" Then Major Chamberlain falls off his horse over towards me to the left, fearfully wounded, and a sergeant helps me carry him below the ridge. But no one stops for the dead and wounded; all are anxious to follow their leaders and reach the opposite shore. I also follow on my horse across and fall into line, the enemy has flown and makes no immediate rally; some twenty-five Confederate prisoners curse their own men for running away with their horses and leaving them to be captured on foot by us and from

them we get some information about their commands, but not much. The shape of the one horse path into the ford as I had left the passage to the water between the two trees, was shaped something

like this,  at best perhaps three feet wide.

No sane man could be blamed for not wanting to ride into that apparent trap, however the First Rhode Island did not balk at it. Our dismounted cavalry acting as sharpshooters along the northern bank gave the rebels in the trenches no chance to bob their heads up for a dead aim at us from over their pits, our men having a good rest, could get excellent range from fair shelter; to poke their heads up meant sure death, and so it was that the Virginians must have fired at least a bucket full of lead across at us with comparatively small loss to us. So sure was their Gen. Fitzhugh Lee that ninety men of their's could hold the ford against all comers, that no reinforcements were ready at hand, but later, they all came from Culpepper, fourteen miles away, to

drive us back into the river, or bag the whole lot of us.

A proper wagon road was within an hour opened through the abatis of trees to allow the ambulances and artillery to follow us, and join us on the south side of the Rappahannock.

Our advance reported the enemy coming, and their artillery soon told us so.

Colonel Duffie rode along in front of us and warned us, "When you charge, you don't gallop; when you charge, you walk, you trot, you touch your next man's stirrups; you keep closed up in line; you don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes, then you give 'em hell."

And we certainly did, not only once, but many times that very day. Now came the opportunity for the reward, Colonel Duffie had so richly earned by the severe, exhausting drills he had given our officers and men in the last year in his own French way,—but hold, "Here they come!" How fearfully beautiful appears this grand Virginia cavalry, dashing down the muddy road from the distance; out of the woody road into the field they line up in battle array

with red battle flags in which we see the cross of stars, fluttering out right in the wind, they just out of our pistol range. "Look, yes, sure," fast and furious they are coming. My left guide chews a navy plug of tobacco, almost eating it like a hardtack from his trembling hand. "Stop shaking," I said. "Stop yourself," he replies, and sure enough my cowardly feet are drumming in the wooden stirrups and without my permission either. "Stop," I say, pushing my feet down and my weight upon them. I admit now, that I was seriously nervous; yes, trembling. Then came the order of "Draw sabres!" the bugles sounded, and in a compact unbroken line we met the yelling, shooting, charging enemy.

It was an open level field, there were no stone walls, no ditches or any serious obstructions between us, but down went their horses and riders before us, surged, spread out, turned to right, turned to left; turned right and left about, then in jumbled and scattered parts rushed back to their former positions. Clouds of smoke, rattling of revolvers, a hasty retreat and the first charge was ours.

I think we cheered, but I am not sure if we did.

Now we felt ourselves solid for what came next—another charge. In this melee a rebel struck me a wicked blow over the head with his heavy revolver. I felt queer, but I held my own and kept my saddle and stuck to my work, when suddenly my horse reared and plunged amidst the affray, then stood stark still and became immovable, paralyzed. This left me behind, standing, and the boys moving on, following up the retreating cavalry. I was alone upon my horse. I dismounted and found two bullets in my horse's body. "Poor Billy's time was up." (George Curtis had him, he swapped with me for my old one and a ten dollar bill; George soon after left for Canada.)

I stood there looking him over, saw him bleed and then boo-hooed like a child; I cried as if I had lost a brother; he had been my most faithful, playful friend, my good reliable carrier and companion for many months, and to care and feed him with the best and with my own rations when nothing else was left, had been my pleasure. I removed bridle, emptied him his feed of oats from his saddle, loosened the saddle girth and left him standing stiff. I next chased for a

stray cavalry horse over the battlefield for a new mount. In the distance stood in the field a log hut and still farther on a decent looking larger house. A horse was near the hut. When I came close to it I found that the poor beast was hopelessly ruined, a common shot had struck his jaw, which was completely shot away below his eyes. My impulse was to put him out of his misery. I followed him up and he was not slow. He trotted into the zigzag broken tumble-down fence and into the yard of the log hut. I drew my revolver endeavoring to face him. A wretched looking white man sat on the doorstep of the hut, smoking a corncob pipe, gloomy, unkempt, and whiskered. "Don't shoot him in my yard," he whined at me, when the horse fell down dead at his feet. "What are you doing here?" I demanded of him. "Can't stand it inside," he whimpered. Stepping over him I opened the door into the only room and there before me the bare floor was littered with rebel wounded; there were twenty or more stretched out; no fire, no water, no medicine, no cloth or bandage to staunch the ebbing blood, and worse, two poor white women crouched together, terrorized

in the corner. I stepped in pools of blood, it stuck to the soles of my boots like liquid glue, it was indeed a ghastly sight; a cold, damp Virginia March chill pervaded the hovel, entirely devoid of furniture.

"What can I do for you, men?" I inquired. "Nothing," said one, and he was right; "Doctor," said another. One man painfully raised himself on his elbow. Yes, that face, the man who struck me over the head an hour ago; he it was, I am quite sure. I said I was very sorry for him, and would do all I could for him and for them all. Reopening the door I sharply commanded the "poor white" to make a fire or I would blow his head off (not meant in earnest). A small pint bag of coffee mixed with sugar I fished out of the saddle bag on the dead horse, and soon there was sweet warmth and "Union coffee" and a roaring big wood fire. The women took courage and soon made themselves useful to those who were not altogether hopelessly wounded. I next ran across the field and road to the larger house, which was full of our own wounded Union cavalry with our surgeons, full of bloody work. "Union or rebels?" inquired the surgeon. "Rebels," I replied.

"Can't come, our men first," he retorted as he continued his work. Yes, there was Corporal Joseph Vincent from Westerly, Rhode Island, having his wounded leg amputated above the knee, having been shot by the enemy while crossing the river. He died from the effects of his wound. In all my war experience this was the only time I had witnessed the fullest misery of the battlefield, and that is in the rear, and I never, never saw another, because I did not want to see another; the front to me was preferable with its excitement and danger.

I returned with some bandages for the wounded in the hut. "Thank you," said he; "my name is William W. St. Clair from Franklin County, Virginia, Second Virginia Cavalry, take it down and write to my people, for I feel fearfully bad and may not live this out." In my notebook I placed his name and address. The shooting seemed farther and lesser and I knew that our boys were driving the enemy toward Culpepper. The white man and his two sisters, feeling that danger of battle had passed, had better courage and continued their services with the poor fellows wishing them good cheer. I again chased the

fields over for a decent horse, and at last picked up a tall rawboned Confederate bay with a cheap Confederate outfit, and made for the front. On our retirement that evening, we passed over the whole fighting grounds, my poor horse still stood on all fours, stiffened in all of his legs; he had not touched his oats. I was in the rear, falling back, when I jumped off and affectionately petted him once more. Close behind in came the rebel cavalry following us up at short distance; I hugged Billy good-bye. "Shoot him and come, or you'll get left," warningly hollered some one. One shot from my revolver between his ears and poor Billy fell. I galloped after my men and all of us recrossed the river with our own wounded and captured prisoners. A few shots for a sort of "brag" were sent after us by our Virginians, but they were not in any way anxious to renew the fight and we returned victorious to our camps.

The rebels cared for their dead and wounded. I wrote to the family at the time, which may not have passed the lines, as post offices North and South were not connected at all. In December, 1864, I wrote again and with the following reply:

"GOGGINSVILLE, FRANKLIN CO., VA.,

February 4, 1865.

MR. WM. E. MEYER:

DEAR SIR: Yours of the 26th December, '64, came safe to hand a few days since. I assure you I was much pleased to receive a letter from you. I had expected that my name and the occasion in which we met had passed from your memory long since, but to me it is never to be forgotten.

At the time all seemed darkness and gloom around. But the reception of your letter brings to my recollection one bright spot, or as it were, an oasis in me. I am under many obligations to you for favors done me at Kelly's Ford. Laboring as you remember at the time under the effects of three wounds, I was hardly in a condition rightly to appreciate your services, much less than return my gratitude at the time. What became of the comrade of whom you speak, I cannot tell.

I was removed from the house where you left me the next morning to Culpepper Court House, thence to Gordonsville where I remained three months. From there I came home, My wounds in the meantime cured up except my broken leg which was some time getting well. It was badly treated, from the effects of which it is some shorter than the other, also a little crooked.

The short-one can be remedied by a corn heel and sole boot.

I have remained home since my return from Gordonsville. I got retirement from service. Feeling greatly indebted to you for services rendered.

Wishing you health and prosperity and hoping to hear from you soon, I remain,

Yours very truly,

WM. W. ST. CLAIR.

P. S. Excuse bad pen and paper as you see this is Confederate paper."

The fighting J. E. B. Stuart's Cavalry will well be honestly respected by the First Rhode Island Cavalry, for when on the 17th of March, 1863, cavalier met cavalier then came the "Tug of War."

On the 16th of December, 1911, at Bermuda, when I had read the foregoing to my son Edgar, aged thirty years who is acting American consul here in Bermuda, said he, "Excuse me, father, how is it that you did the shooting at Kelly's Ford with your sabres drawn." "The sabre," I said, "has a leather strap which fits around the wrist and hangs to it, can therefore be instantly dropped without losing it, then the revolver is whipped out of one's boot leg, if the rider happens to wear high top cavalry boots, into which the large cavalry revolver snugly fits, so that in a jiffy he can use either, if quick enough

about it. Uncle Sam's boots were not fitted for this; they, on the whole were wretched leather, cheaply made, and neither of use nor ornament. My friends in Newport paid five dollars in postage to get my boots to the front to me."

"And how," continued Mr. Edgar, "how could the picket allow himself to be kidnapped? Why did he not shoot the rascal first?" "My boy," said I, "when a wise soldier unexpectedly looks into the muzzle of a loaded gun with a good Confederate behind it, he surrenders quickly and gracefully, there is no time for argument, the trigger is very touchy, and can be pulled in a wink, when one less soldier is on the regimental roll. The only thing in a tight predicament to do, the only chance for one's life, is to follow your captor, or more likely walk ahead of him."

My wife had discussed the merits of Gen. George Washington and those of President Abraham Lincoln in comparison; claiming Lincoln to be of greater merit.

Dear comrades and friends, you will see what I had to argue with, wife and son. It makes time flow pleasantly. Looking at my watch, it pointed at two

in the early morning, when it ought to have stood at eleven p. m.

Out lights and to bed at two a. m.; fighting over the old battle grounds, who can help it, for the glory of it is in us yet. Not for a million would I have missed it; not for a million would I wish to suffer through it again.

The ranks of our Rhode Island men were composed of sound, solid, common sense material. As I sit here at my desk writing, I review the First Rhode Island Cavalry. They come marching on by fours, the brass band ahead, playing, all on horseback; officers, men, music, prancing steeds, proud of their riders, sabres rattling, infantry on both sides of the Virginia road, lying for a short rest to make room for the cavalry hastening to the front. Infantry yells cheer at us and shouts of "Give it to 'em boys! give it to 'em!" Shots are heard ahead, our band "falls out," but plays "*Dixie*" loud enough for the enemy to hear it.

APPENDIX.

In the year 1848, it being the year of the reign of Frederick William IV, King of Prussia, in the streets of Danzig and in the province of that kingdom, my father might have been seen holding by his right hand my elder brother aged seven years, and by his left hand myself a youth of five years of age.

My uncle was a staff officer in a Pomeranian regiment which was expected to come marching in from a far fortress, and we, with a great throng of citizens, went to the city gates to meet them with cheers of welcome. The rank and file of the army was the conscripted youth of the citizen people, to serve the king at least three years. The motto was: "For God, for King, and Fatherland," but the real object of the king, king, only, by the Grace of God, was, to serve the king, and the king's will only.

The people had made a new flag of three stripes,

black, yellow and red; carried by a strong man of the people which greeted the regimental flag, of the black Eagle with the scepter and the crown in his claws, on white ground, with a border of black, fluttering in the bright summer breeze; the royal flag of Prussia. Fifes and drums struck up a lively march and cheers rent the air from the crowd greeting their dust-stained young men as they came on through the street of "Newmarket."

A dear old aunt of ours in the spirit of the times, had crocheted cockades of "black, yellow, red" and had sewed them on our caps. My father, like others of the unarmed crowd, wore ribbons of the same three colors, pinned to his breast. It was an expression of the desire the Prussian people had for "Liberty of the Press" (*Press freiheit*), in the year of 1848. Editors had been jailed for daring to beg this royal favor.

Peaceful and in a joyous mood was the citizen gathering, when came the gruff shout from the officer on horseback, "Down with that flag," as he neared it. But the flag of "black, gold, red" also enjoyed the breeze and unfolded itself, and did not

come down, supported by the quavering approval of the surrounding people. On, down the length of the street the soldiery marched unsuspectingly, when the command of "Halt," sounded along the marching line. The next commands were "Right face into line!" "Left face into line!" "Fix bayonets!" and then the command of "Charge bayonets!" pierced the air and the hearts of the people.

In blind obedience his Prussian majesty's subjects charged their own kith and kin, crowding them in a rush against the houses. But no bayonet pierced the flesh. Bayonets pierced the walls close to my little body. O how dreadful I felt as the young soldiers stabbed the wall by my side, and I, already in my young fright, felt it enter my bowels.

There were no sidewalks in old Danzig. Frantically the people rushed backward, sideways down the street before the pointed bayonets of a disciplined army. All fell back before the terror of the glittering steel; no one was killed, but men were bruised, battered and trampled over by the obedient army of the King of Prussia, their onward move to clear the street of a so-called mob.

Before we had come to our senses here, and were about to turn into a side street, a "black, gold, red" flag stood upright, stuck into a heaped up mound of round cobblestones. Men were bending and sweating tearing up the street, and as the soldiers were ordered to charge the new "Prussian tricolor," a shower of cobblestones met them and a bloody work began in earnest.

Father and his boys escaped without harm, and were making for home in a hurry, when the mounted gendarmery came trotting past to "bag" the fighters for the "Free press," and soon the row was over, and the revolution of 1848 was ripe, overripe, not only in Prussia but pretty well over all Germany, Austria, and France.

"The King fled the country.

The King came back."

His majesty came back to deal out punishment to his revolting, disobedient and ungrateful subjects.

I remember for two years after that of visiting a relative in the fortress of Danzig where his wife was permitted to see her husband once a month, for an

hour or two, in the presence of a guard; and believe me, this poor man had only worn a cockade of black, gold and red, but had never left his house during the turmoil. Thousands of good peace loving citizens went to the "Forts" for years after. My father went to America and had to steal his way out of his own country and seek a new home on our western shore. My mother desiring the advantage of a good German school education for her four children conscientiously kept me for eleven years at about every schoolday's session. I had entered school in my fifth year studying Latin and French at the age of six, at the German high school controlled by a paternal despotic government. With a good early military school training and strict educational cramming we were also systematically trained to particularly hate the French nation. We were impressed that the English were unbalanced in mind, in fact "somewhat demented;" that the Italians were dreamers; and that the Americans consisted of the worst element of Europe (landstreicher); that all the good for nothings of Europe went to America where anarchy reigned.

"Herr Professor" would tell of the loose rattlesnakes in American homes; of the Indians who were tomahawking the arriving immigrants as they landed. And after much good painstaking study in a German school under semi-military German professors, nearly all of them ex-army officers. I yet gratefully and with pride look backward to these earnest men, honest and true, who were obliged to teach much after text-books made by royal command, in which they themselves did not believe. To this day I am thankful for my early training.

How they also taught that America must be bad, very bad, when slavery, that blot of a nation, flourished in America, a *so-called* republic, where one could buy and sell human flesh with impunity, where one could beat, maim, and kill his slave at pleasure. Brutes in human form swinging the lash, had bloodhounds tearing the flesh from fleeing young slave mothers. The Herr Professor finished with "Boys, honor your king, stay in the Fatherland and remain honest." Partly true, partly not, the best blood of Germany emigrated to the United States and ranked high in the esteem of America in peace and in war.

At the age of fifteen, I was in the fourth class (Quarta). Many letters of love, advice and patient waiting came from our dear father in America to his four children at school. He died at Memphis, Tenn., his memory cherished by mother and by his four children to this day.

My "Herr Doctor" (so titled) at Quarta one day again touched, in his geography, on America, and on American life, in which he wound up with that wild west story of the Indians and their war dances in New York, tomahawking the unprotected European emigrants on the outskirts of the city, America a wilderness.

I, having read and reread my father's letters many, many times, stood up in my seat, held up my right hand respectfully for a humble hearing. "Herr Doctor!" I said, "My father wrote me there were no live Indians in the streets of New York. All the Indians in the city of New York were carved from wood, gaily painted and decorated, and were placed life-size before tobacco shops to attract attention to the smokers passing them, and that New York was as civilized as is the seaport of Danzig."

"Herr Doctor" stared me into a shiver. "*Your father* is not teaching history at *this* school. *I am* your teacher, when *I* say a thing is so, it is so, and it remains so, and I will not permit *you* to stand up before *me* and to contradict me; *sit down* Meyer, that will do. Such unheard of impudence is appalling."

I did *not* sit down; "My father," I continued, "was in America since 1848 and he said——."

"How dare you! how dare you! Come to the front and apologize before the class for your insolence!"

I knew what was in store for me, but I came out in a weak bravado, with the class of sixty boys humming more courage into me in low whispers floating by me in passing them to face my learned foe.

"Refusing to apologize, eh?"

"What my father says is true," and then I received the "Maulschellen" on both cheeks from the teacher flat right and left hands, which made my teeth shake and my ears hum like a beehive, and my brain reel.

Without asking, I rushed from the classroom, mad with rage, into the cold November midday

street (I would be sixteen the next April). My heart was ready to burst with the insult to my dear father's memory. I was completely overcome with grief and indignation, and only found relief in a flood of tears as I reached the street.

I walked rapidly on, I did not wish to pain my mother, somehow I reached the "City Bourse." Into the Bourse I ran, the good-natured grayhaired red-coated janitor of the Bourse knew me; my father had been his friend when he was in "Wheat and Rye" on the Exchange. There were shipowners, merchants and captains grouped in conference on ships, cargoes and the sea.

Captain Aschenloef, called a gentleman, "he sails the fine bark *Tugend*." The *Tugend* of Danzig.

I wedged in with, "Captain, don't you want a cabin boy?"

The captain consented.

"Mother! I have a ship, I am off to sea; I am nearly sixteen. Why not, mother?"

Dear old mother nearly fainted at the startling news. "Look at my cheeks, mother," I said, "No more school for me." And mother helped me, gave

me her Bible, and her blessing, and I am glad to mention later lived with me at the age of eighty-four in America.

As cabin boy I sailed to Holland, Norway, Italy, England, and to Cuba, where slavery was in its full blast in 1860. In Cuba, on the whole, I found the slave of Cuba happier and more contented than the average unskilled peasant of Prussia with only a step removed from serfs of neighboring Russia. I saw the Cuban slaves on plantation, in field and on the sugar wharves, many with native tribal scars on the breasts and chests and brows, showing they were born Africans, landed from slave ships without much hindrance from the Spanish authorities in the year 1860.

"Yellow Jack," so prevalent in Cuba, soon found me out and laid me low. When after many weeks I recovered, my German ship had sailed away and had left me behind convalescent. The Newport schooner *Harriet Lewis* became my floating home, and in her I spent a genial sailor's life in the beautiful South, amidst the slavery of the times before the war.

Up twenty miles from Mobile on the Alabama

River, lived a wealthy planter of cotton, owning a sawmill and immense tracts of timber whose name was Ladd, at "Twenty Mile Bluff." To me he appeared the ideal of a Southern gentleman who was kind to both whites and blacks, but who, like the great majority of the South, believed in "Southern Rights," in "State Secession."

When after the war, in November, 1865, I again sailed into Mobile, where yet across the bay, rows of piles were sticking up to the surface driven there by the Confederates to prevent the Union navy running into Mobile. I once more made fast to the wharf of Mobile; this time with Capt. Isaac Bowen Briggs, in the Newport schooner *Presto*.

Captain Briggs had sailed the schooner *Fanny Fern* which Mr. Ladd had loaded with P. P. lumber many times five years before. Their business relations had been before the war and were now again of most cordial character. The *Presto* was a much larger vessel than the former and about 250 tons burden.

We again sailed to "Twenty Mile Bluff," and moored to the barren bank for a cargo of timber at

Mr. Ladd's plantation. What a terrible change the war had brought. A little new sawmill was struggling with great charred logs of pine to whiz them into boards. All was desolation about his beautiful residence burned by renegade slaves. The Union troopshad had a camp on his plantation and had devastated everything for miles. Some charred and dead trees were standing yet, isolated like ghostly ghost-like monuments of the terrors of the past four years.

Captain Briggs and all of the ship's crew felt as much interest in the dispatching of his work as if we had to make good to good Mr. Ladd for others' wrong doings. The coons and young pigs and the pumpkins came to us from the little there was left; for about this time the carpethaggers were overrunning the South with their "reconstruction policy," urging the blacks on to violence against their old masters, who stole from their masters the little left them.

Some of Mr. Ladd's former slaves had stuck to their old master through fire and sword, and were yet faithful to their protector. They worked for him, helped him to build a log cabin over the ruins of his old Colonial home, sawed wood, and worked

for love whilst other thousands of worthless negroes were idling in the city of Mobile, prattling of liberty, and that a black man would be master yet and a white man his slave. Poor misguided, ignorant free-men; slavery in America was dead.

Mr. Ladd stood upon the bluff of the Alabama River, the weeping gray moss beyond reaching down from the giant forest trees against the silent Alabama stream. Like hoary monster faces decked with flowing beards these trees appeared. A cotton laden steamer, an old timer, puffed along and started up the steam calliope like in the good old days before the war and sweet music rang again upon the flowing stream in times of peace.

"My two sons were killed by your men in the Lost Cause; my home destroyed, my property gone, my slaves freed and demoralized, and I am living in a log house my own people built for me. Matters look brighter now; I am getting new courage. After all I have gone through I am satisfied it has ended as it did; both sides were equally to blame for this war. It had to come. Thank God it is over."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

WILLIAM E. MEYER,

CORPORAL, FIRST RHODE ISLAND CAVALRY VOLUNTEERS.

1843. April 4th, in Danzig, Kingdom of Prussia, made his first appearance in this good world, and there spent sixteen happy boyhood years.

1861-1864. First Rhode Island Cavalry.

1864-1865. Providence Conference Seminary at East Greenwich, R. I. Studied navigation and engineering. American citizen.

1866-1869. A shipmaster certificate 5,553 American Shipmasters' Association member.

1872. Assistant engineer caisson work, Brooklyn bridge, with Colonel Robling.

1872-1873. "International bridge," at Niagara

River. In charge of submarine work and coffer dams for foundations of bridge.

1873. Married in Flushing, Long Island.

1874. To Bermuda, shipbroker and shipowner, S. S. coal contractor.

1880-1898. German consul, Bermuda.

1898-1899. Spanish War, transport and despatch services on General Miles' staff, Porto Rico. Special mention "for absolute perfection of requirements," from Brig. Gen. C. F. Humphrey, Cuba.

1900-1912. In business in Bermuda.

And here I copy from my old note-book which was about the only thing left me after I had reached Richmond as a prisoner of war. A fellow cavalryman in misery at Belle Island had composed the poem of which he seemed proud, and with apologies, I give it, for the *truth* of it:

"BELLE ISLAND SONG."

- 1) Come listen to me, you soldiers true,
And I'll a story sing for you,
It's all about this Island Belle
There cruel starvings is made to tell.

CHORUS: Ho, Belle Island, ho!
Ho Belle Island, ho! ho! ho!
Ho Belle Island, ho!

2) The comforts here are very great,
You get your grub but very late,
Just take the Sergeant by the hair
If he refuses to give your share.

CHORUS:

3) They feed us here but twice a day,
So little a bird could carry it away,
With stinking meat and muddy soup,
T'll give us the measles and the croup.

CHORUS:

4) This Johnny Reb is a funny man,
He boards us on the southern plan,
You have nothing to do but walk the street
With ragged clothes and nothing to eat.

CHORUS:

5) Belle Island is a splendid camp,
We sleep so well we get the cramp,
With rebel guards behind, before,
And "graybacks" thousands on the floor.

CHORUS:

- 6) But comrades let us happy be
For Uncle Sam will set us free!
And God may bless our starry flag!
And may the army never lag!
But bravely fight for right of birth!
And sweep the rebels from the earth!

CHORUS:

N. B. In it you see the strain of patriotism, the devotion and love for it, to give liberty and life for his country, of this suffering soldier; and he was only one of thousands who sacrificed their young lives, starving in the noble cause. The inducements of the rebels were indeed inviting to a starving man, viz.: To work for them in their shops, on the fortifications, to join their army, or to turn spy and traitor. The prisoner of war could join their cause, and the prison door was open to him to walk out a traitor.

W. E. M. Notebook.

Corporal William E. Meyer, First Rhode Island
Cavalry Volunteers, discharged at Cedar Creek, Va.,
Oct. 21, 1864.

As copied from discharge papers: W. E. M.

LIST OF BATTLES PARTICIPATED IN BY WILLIAM E. MEYER,

CORPORAL.

COMPANY A.

1. Cedar Mountain.....August 9, 1862
2. Rappahannock Station..... " 22-26, "
3. Gainesville..... " 28, "
4. Groveton " 29, "
5. Second Bull Run..... " 30, "
6. Chantilly.....Sept. 1, "
7. Jefferson.....Nov. 1, "
8. Kelly's Ford.....,.....March 17, 1863
9. Kelly's Ford Field.....April 29, "
10. Rapidan Station.....May 1, "
11. Chancellorsville..... " 4, "
12. Beverley's Ford.....June 9, "
13. Culpepper.....Sept. 13, "
14. Rapidan Station..... " 14, "
15. Bristow Station..... " 14, "
16. White House Landing.....June 21, 1864
17. Malvern Hill.....July 30, "
18. Winchester.....Sept. 19, "
19. Fisher's Hill.....Oct. 19, "
20. Cedar Creek..... " 19, "

Corporal Meyer was particularly distinguished for bravery at the battle of "Kelly's Ford."

(Signed) JOSHUA VOSE,

Captain commanding the Regiment.

PAWTUCKET, R. I.,

24 Sept., 1911.

WM. E. MEYER.

NOTE.—I had no furlough, no hospital, was in all fights and skirmishes, and scouts, excepting the "Middleburg fight," and was a prisoner from November 1863 to May 1864, captured by Captain Chapman's force of Mosby's command at New Baltimore, with the picket, of which I had charge. Our cavalry at Warrenton 50 men, — 5 months 21 days Prisoner of War in "Castle Pemberton" in Richmond and in Danville Prison, Prison No. 4, Floor 4. The list is not complete as *above*, it was written by Capt. Vose from hurried memory at Cedar Creek, Va. At Gettysburg Battle and Retreat of Lee, July 1863 and other fights.

W. E. M.

EXTRACTS FROM THE CAMPAIGNS OF STUART'S
CAVALRY, BY MAJOR H. B. McCLELLAN,

CHIEF OF STAFF.

Page 215.

Now, indeed, there was an opportunity for General Averell to "rout or destroy" Fitz Lee's brigade. He had a large force in reserve; and two fresh regiments, one on either side of the road, could have swept that field beyond the hope of recovery. He could have ridden over Breathed's guns before the brigade could possibly have formed to protect them. Why did he not do it? Let us turn to his report for information. Near the beginning of his report, General Averell says:

"On the night of the 16th the fires of a camp of the enemy were seen from Mount Holly Church by my scouts between Ellis' and Kelly's fords, and the drums, beating retreat and tattoo, were heard from their camps near Rappahannock station."

And thus it appears that the phantom of "rebel infantry" was conjured up before General Averell's imagination at the very outset of his expedition. Further on he says:

"Here the enemy opened three pieces, two ten-pounder Parrotts and one six-pounder gun, from the side of the hill, directly in front of my left. No horses could be discovered about these guns, and from the manner in which they were served it was evident that they were covered by earthworks. It was also obvious that our artillery could not hurt them. Our ammunition was of miserable quality and nearly exhausted. . . . Theirs, on the contrary, was exceedingly annoying. Firing at a single company or squadron in line, they would knock a man out of ranks very frequently. . . . Their skirmishers again threatened my left, and it was reported to me that infantry had been seen at a distance to my right, moving toward my rear, and the cars could be heard running on the road in rear of the enemy, probably bringing reinforcements. It was 5.30 P. M., and it was necessary to advance my cavalry upon their intrenched positions, to make a direct and desperate attack, or to withdraw across the river. Either operation would be attended with im-

minent hazard. My horses were much exhausted. We had been successful thus far. I deemed it proper to withdraw."

It is hardly necessary to state that there was no Confederate infantry nearer to Fitz Lee's brigade than the camps of the army in the vicinity of Fredericksburg.

We may thus sum up the results of this battle: With 2,100 men and six guns, between four or five o'clock A. M. and 5.30 P. M., General Averell advanced less than two miles on the road to Culpepper Courthouse, his avowed destination. He was turned back by General Fitz Lee with 800 men aided by a well served battery of four guns, and reinforced by imaginary "drums beating retreat and tattoo . . . near Rappahannock Station;" by imaginary "earth-works" and "rifle-pits, which could not be easily turned," but which must be approached by "a direct and desperate attack;" by imaginary "infantry . . . seen at a distance to my right, moving toward my rear;" and last, but not least, by imaginary ears "heard running on the road in rear of the enemy, probably bringing reinforcements."

We cannot excuse General Averell's conduct. He ought to have gone to Culpepper Courthouse.

General Lee reports a loss of eleven killed, eighty-eight wounded, and thirty-four taken prisoners. Of the latter, twenty-five were captured at the ford; only nine were lost in the subsequent fighting. This fact is in itself an eloquent commentary on the conduct of this brigade. General Lee reports a loss of seventy-one horses killed, eighty-seven wounded, and twelve captured. In his address on the battle of Chancellorsville he calls attention to the large proportion of horses killed, as showing "the closeness of the contending forces."

General Averell reports an aggregate loss of eighty. Out of this number, forty-one casualties occurred in the First Rhode Island Cavalry. This regiment fairly carried off the honors of the day on the Federal side.

COMMENTS BY CAPTAIN GEORGE N. BLISS,
FIRST RHODE ISLAND CAVALRY.

Major H. B. McClellan, General Stuart's Chief of Staff, has given a very fair account of this battle of Kelly's Ford as seen from the Confederate side. General Averell had under his command more than twice the force of the Confederates but he left one of his best regiments (First Massachusetts Cavalry) on the left bank of the Rappahannock River, apparently for the purpose of guarding against an attack in the rear. He seems to have fought a defensive battle. Cavalry demands sharp and well-supported attacks. Averell did not follow up his success as he should have done. General Hooker, commander of the Army of the Potomac at that time, sent no thanks to Averell for his services, but he sent a message to Lieut. Simeon A. Brown, First Rhode Island Cavalry, and thanked him personally for the

gallant manner in which he charged across the river at Kelly's Ford and recommended him to be promoted to the rank of captain. Captain Brown died shortly afterward from disease contracted in the service. Averell was a West Point graduate who seemed to have a talent for failure. The following extracts from Sheridan's memoirs shows how his military career closed in the Civil War:

From his early days enough to Morganize. With standing orders the Confederate managed to assemble considerable force to meet him, and being the only one the rear guard, he awaited the arrival of Morgan, who, I had informed him, would be hurried to the front with all possible despatch, for I thought that Morgan must be close at hand. He turned out, however, that he was not near by at all, and, moreover, that without good reason he had refrained from taking any part whatever in pursuing the enemy in the night from Fisher's Hill, and in fact had gone into camp and left to the infantry the work of pursuit.

It was nearly noon when Averell came up and a great deal of precious time had been lost. We had

FROM SHERIDAN'S MEMOIRS.

Pages 42-45.

Meanwhile I, having remained at Woodstock, sent Devin's brigade to press the enemy under every favorable opportunity, and if possible prevent him from halting long enough to reorganize. Notwithstanding Devin's efforts the Confederates managed to assemble a considerable force to resist him, and being too weak for the rear guard, he awaited the arrival of Averell, who, I had informed him, would be hurried to the front with all possible despatch, for I thought that Averell must be close at hand. It turned out, however, that he was not near by at all, and, moreover, that without good reason he had refrained from taking any part whatever in pursuing the enemy in the flight from Fisher's Hill, and in fact had gone into camp and left to the infantry the work of pursuit.

It was nearly noon when Averell came up and a great deal of precious time had been lost. We had

some hot words, but hoping that he would retrieve the mistake of the night before, I directed him to proceed to the front at once, and in conjunction with Devin close with the enemy. He reached Devin's command about three o'clock in the afternoon, just as this officer was pushing the Confederates so energetically that they were abandoning Mount Jackson; yet Averell utterly failed to accomplish anything. Indeed, his indifferent attack was not at all worthy the excellent soldiers he commanded, and when I learned that it was his intention to withdraw from the enemy's front, and this, too, on the indefinite report of a signal officer that a "brigade or division" of Confederates was turning his right flank, and that he had not seriously attempted to verify the information, I sent him this order:

"HEADQUARTERS MIDDLE MILITARY DIVISION,
WOODSTOCK, VA., Sept. 23, 1864.

Brevet Major-General AVERELL:

Your report and report of signal-officer received. I do not want you to let the enemy bluff you or your command, and I want you to distinctly understand this note. I do not advise rashness, but I do desire resolution and actual fighting, with

necessary casualties, before you retire. There must now be no backing or filling by you without a superior force of the enemy actually engaging you.

P. H. SHERIDAN,

Major-General Commanding."

Some little time after this note went to Averell, word was brought me that he had already carried out the programme indicated when forwarding the report of the expected turning of his right, and that he had actually withdrawn and gone into camp near Hawkinsburg. I then decided to relieve him from command of his division, which I did, ordering him to Wheeling, Col. William H. Powell being assigned to succeed him.

The removal of Averell was but the culmination of a series of events extending back to the time I assumed command of the Middle Military Division. At the outset, General Grant, fearing discord on account of Averell's ranking Terbert, authorized me to relieve the former officer, but I hoped that if any trouble of this sort arose it could be allayed, or at least repressed, during the campaign against Early, since the different commands would often

have to act separately. After that, the dispersion of my army by the return of the Sixth Corps and Torbert's cavalry to the Army of the Potomac would take place, I thought, and this would restore matters to their normal condition; but Averell's dissatisfaction began to show itself immediately after his arrival at Martinsburg, on the 14th of August, and, except when he was conducting some independent expedition, had been manifested on all occasions since. I therefore thought that the interest of the service would be subserved by removing one whose growing indifference might render the best laid plans inoperative."

"HEADQUARTERS MIDDLE MILITARY DIVISION,
HARRISONBURG, VA., Sept. 25, 1864—11.30 P. M.

LIEUT.-GENERAL GRANT, *Comd'g, &c., City Point, Va.:*

* * * I have relieved Averill from his command. Instead of following the enemy when he was broken at Fisher's Hill (so that there was not a cavalry organization left), he went into camp and let me pursue the enemy for a distance of fifteen miles, with infantry, during the night. * * *

P. H. SHERIDAN,

Major General."

By EZRA K. PARKER,

(Late First Lieutenant Battery B,

Personal Narratives

SEVENTH SERIES, No. 6

Campaign of Battery D, First Rhode Island
Light Artillery, in Kentucky
and East Tennessee

By EZRA K. PARKER,

[Late First Lieutenant Battery E,
First Rhode Island Light Artillery]

PERSONAL NARRATIVES

OF MEN IN THE

WAR OF THE REBELLION,

WHICH WERE READ BEFORE THE

RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS

HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

SEVENTH SERIES NO. 8.

PROVIDENCE:
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1885.

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

SEVENTH SERIES No. 6.

PROVIDENCE:
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1913.

Campaign of Battery D, First Rhode
Island Light Artillery, in Kentucky
and East Tennessee.

SNOW & FARNHAM CO., PRINTERS.

(Late First Regiment Battery F, First Rhode Island
Light Artillery.)

PROVIDENCE,

PUBLISHED BY THE AGENTS.

Campaign of Battery D, First Rhode Island Light Artillery, in Kentucky and East Tennessee.

BY

EZRA K. PARKER,

[Late First Lieutenant Battery E, First Rhode Island
Light Artillery.]

PROVIDENCE:

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.

1913.

CAMPAIGN OF BATTERY D, FIRST RHODE ISLAND
LIGHT ARTILLERY, IN KENTUCKY
AND EAST TENNESSEE.

In March, 1863, Gen. A. E. Burnside, having been relieved at his own request of the command of the Army of the Potomac, was soon afterwards assigned to the Department of the Ohio. Upon his special request, the Ninth Army Corps was also detailed for service in this department, and at once preparations were made for the transportation of the corps from Virginia to Kentucky. Battery D, First Rhode Island Light Artillery, Capt. William W. Buckley, was at that time attached to the Ninth Corps and was sent with its corps to the west. This battery had been at the beginning of its service attached to the first division of the Army of the Potomac, and when the army was divided into army corps, this battery was included in the first corps commanded by General McDowell. Its first active service was in the short and successful campaign to Fredericksburg, in

April and May, 1862. Then it went through the campaign of the Army of Virginia, under Gen. John Pope, losing heavily at the battle of the second Manassas, then again under General McClellan, in his successful campaign of South Mountain and Antietam. Meantime, General McDowell had been succeeded by General Hooker in the command of the First Army Corps. It was in the Fredericksburg campaign under Burnside, and was by his order transferred from the First to the Ninth Army Corps. After a not unpleasant march, both by rail and steamboat, the battery reached Lexington, Ky., on March 30th, 1863, and went into camp on the Fair grounds. Here it remained but a week, and then the line of march was taken up for camp Dick Robinson. On the 26th, the battery began its march from camp Dick Robinson to Somerset, near the Cumberland river, completing it on the 7th of May, 1863, and there it remained until the 7th of June. It was now expected that within a few days the march for East Tennessee would commence. Although we, members of the battery, well knew that the campaign would be arduous and full of dangers,

still we were all anxious to advance. In consequence of orders to General Burnside to send a part of his command to Vicksburg to assist General Grant, and in consequence of the raid of Gen. John Morgan, it was not until the 21st of August, 1863, that the expedition started. The Twenty-third Army Corps was the only corps that commenced at that date the march over the Cumberland river and mountains. General Hartzuff commanded the corps, consisting of three divisions commanded by Generals White, Hascall and Carter, respectively. We were attached to Gen. Hascall's division, and marched with our division by way of Stanford, Crab Orchard and Cub Creek to the Cumberland river. The Ninth Corps was reported to be at Cincinnati and to follow close upon the tracks of the Twenty-third Corps. The strength of the Twenty-third Corps was, perhaps, 15,000 or 20,000 men of all arms.

The march over the Cumberland mountains was full of adventures and labors. It would require a much longer paper than this to describe the many incidents that befell us on that famous march. We had no snow nor ice to encounter, but otherwise I

doubt whether or not Napoleon's crossing of the Alps was more fraught with dangers and hardships than was this crossing of the Cumberland mountains by the Army of the Ohio. On the 4th of September, 1863, we arrived upon the bluffs of the Tennessee river, opposite Loudon. Here we remained, recuperating, until the 15th of September. The enemy had hurriedly retreated upon our arrival at Loudon, leaving horses, mules and beef cattle, which we duly appropriated to our own use. A large amount of wheat and corn was found in the possession of the farmers, which was seized by the quartermasters. A steam flour-mill was found in good condition and was employed in grinding up the wheat and corn. We supplemented our rations with chicken and fresh pork while we were encamped at Loudon. We were on the main line of railway from Virginia to the South-western states. In their retreat from Loudon, the enemy had burned the bridge across the Tennessee at that point. It was several days before we were able to place across the river a pontoon bridge. From the south, in the direction of Chattanooga, Gen. N. B. Forest often threatened us. From the

north, a General Jones was daily reported to be advancing down the valley of the Holston upon Knoxville. About the time that our battery arrived at Loudon, Gen. Burnside made a public entry into Knoxville. General Burnside was not a little disappointed in not having with him the Ninth Army Corps as early as he expected. The corps had been transported from Vicksburg (after having done excellent service before that city and also at Jackson) to Cincinnati, Ohio. In consequence of the great heat at Vicksburg and of the arduous service required of the corps, nearly 50 per cent of the men were sick with dysentery and ague. They were sent into Kentucky as soon as possible to find a healthy camp for a few weeks. Crab Orchard was the place selected for the camp on account of its medicinal springs and salubrious surroundings.

On Sept. 25th, 1863, the first division of the Ninth Army Corps arrived at Knoxville, after being subjected to long, fatiguing marches over bad roads by way of Cumberland Gap and Morristown. Our repose at Loudon was broken by orders to place knapsacks and the ammunition chests of the caissons

upon flat cars in order to expedite a contemplated forced march. The railroad from Loudon was in operation to a point up the Holston valley beyond Knoxville. The order to move was received upon the 15th inst. We made camp on the night of the 15th near Knoxville, about thirty miles from Loudon. On the 16th we advanced to Strawberry Plains, and on the 17th to New Market. We remained in New Market two days, and then received orders to counter-march to Loudon. We had been absent about a week, and had covered in all about 200 miles. The cause of this rapid movement from Loudon to New Market was a rumored attack by the enemy upon our forces in southwestern Virginia. The cause of our return was a dispatch from General Halleck to General Burnside, notifying him that two divisions of General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia had been sent to reinforce General Bragg, and he desired him, General Burnside, to go to General Rosecrans' aid as soon as possible.

On the 23rd of September our battery crossed the Tennessee at Loudon by the aid of a single flat boat large enough to take over only one team and carriage

at a time. It took all day and most of the night to effect the crossing. Soon after crossing, we took up the march for Sweetwater, a station sixteen miles south from Loudon, on the east Tennessee and Georgia railroad. We had no sooner arrived at Sweetwater than we were ordered to countermarch, and away we went back to Loudon. On our arrival there, we were ordered into a rebel fort to the right of the village facing south. This hill was in a bend of the river. A pontoon bridge had been laid across the river and troops of all arms were continually crossing to the south bank. There strong lines of battle were formed, and in expectation of a severe conflict, we awaited the approach of General Forrest, who was steadily driving back our cavalry and mounted infantry upon Loudon. We were all anxious for a brush with the famous General Forrest, and had he assailed our position he would have met with a hot reception. This was the 28th of September, 1863.

Forrest was reported to be advancing with a large mounted force, estimated by citizens and negroes from 3,000 to 15,000 men. We supposed that on the

morning of the 29th we would have a royal battle on the banks of the Tennessee. But day dawned and no attack was delivered, and soon word came from our mounted force that Forrest had commenced his retreat down the valley during the night, while we were watering and feeding our horses and mules and inspecting ammunition. From October 1st to the 5th, we were busy collecting forage. In our wagons, and carefully covered by the forage, were carcasses of hogs and sheep. Our company cooks served up rations which could only be fully appreciated by eating. Men, horses and mules were growing fat, sleek and handsome.

On the 6th of October, we received orders to report to our first division of the Ninth Army Corps at Blue Springs, in the valley of the Holston, distant about ninety-eight miles from Loudon. The enemy were reported to be threatening our communications with Cumberland Gap, and the Ninth Corps had been ordered to prevent all interference with this line. The infantry were transported by rail, but the battery was sent forward on foot. In order that the battery should arrive as soon as possible after the infantry

it was forced along at the rate of about thirty miles per day. We found the roads in very fair condition. At dark, on the 9th, we arrived at Bull Gap, a gorge in one of those spur ranges of mountains that extend out from the main chain, and which, at a distance, resembles somewhat a large windrow of hay. On the next day we passed through the gap and soon came up with our division, posted in lines of battle along Lick Creek.

Our arrival was duly reported and we were ordered to hold ourselves ready to take position and open upon the enemy. Here we found General Burnside, and he gave us a hearty greeting, calling us his Rhode Island boys. We responded sincerely and vociferously. Soon after this the general gave the order for our line to advance, as the enemy made no diversion against us. Someone facetiously said that probably the general had waited for our battery before he ordered the attack. We replied to such remarks by retorting that this showed the general's good judgment. A Colonel Foster was in command of a brigade of cavalry, and General Burnside sent him around by the enemy's right flank to seize and hold

his lines of retreat. As soon as it was probable that Colonel Foster had reached the desired position, a charge was made upon the enemy's position. A sharp and hotly contested fight ensued. We drove the enemy from his position about dark. We here formed a new line and lay upon our arms for a renewal of the fight at dawn. The advance was duly made, but the enemy had fled, and Colonel Foster, as it usually happens in such cases, had not got into position to intercept them. Our battery had been in position all day, but was not called upon at all until about dark to fire a few shots at a battery of the enemy that soon withdrew. We pursued the enemy twenty miles up the valley. At noon, we passed through the village of Greenville, and read the sign over a building, with the simple legend, "A. Johnson, Tailor." A mile beyond Rhea Town we went into camp. On the 12th, the cavalry reported the enemy to be so scattered that further pursuit was useless. On the next day, we started back for Knoxville, and arrived there on the 16th of October, 1863. From Loudon to Rhea Town, and from Rhea Town to Knoxville, made a distance of 226 miles, a daily av-

erage of a little more than 22 miles. For two days we lay at Knoxville.

On the 20th, we marched again for Loudon. We camped that night at Campbell's Station, seventeen miles from Knoxville. We next encamped at Lenoir's Station. This was a very large plantation owned by a Dr. Lenoir. Its lands were very extensive and beautifully situated. The village consisted of a railroad station, the owner's mansion, large farm buildings, yarn factory, houses for overseers and a hundred or more cabins for his slaves. He, the doctor, was a large slave owner, and a violent rebel. He had extensive fields of maize; one of which was estimated to be four miles in length. The width was considerably less. Most of the corn was as high as a man could reach on horseback.

On October 22nd, we marched to Loudon and crossed the river. The village of Loudon is on the left bank of the Tennessee. Soon after the retreat of General Forrest, referred to above, the writer was detailed to open a recruiting office in the village of Loudon, as our several batteries were all short of men. I duly opened the office in a small building

contiguous to a hotel owned by a Mr. Hoss, called by our men "The old hoss." I had two men with me, one a corporal, I appointed clerk; the other man acted as guard and orderly. Handbills were printed and distributed in the vicinity, and on the morning of the second day, as I looked out of the office, I had an idea that a large squadron of cavalry was drawn up before the hotel. The men were thin and lanky, also their horses were the same. All carried guns, some double barrel shotguns; some ancient rifles, and a few modern carbines. I remained in my office, and soon two of the riders dismounted and presented themselves before the guard, who, with drawn saber and revolver in belt, upheld the dignity of the United States Government in the eyes of these horsemen. The United States flag was duly floating in the morning air, and all around were nailed the handbills asking for recruits for the U. S. Volunteer Military service. The men who dismounted represented the whole squad. They inquired of the guard if they could "jine" the Union army, and the guard referred them to me for an answer. They came inside and said "Howdy." I responded by a dignified nod of the

head. I at once entered upon business, and told them the conditions upon which they could become Uncle Samuel's volunteer soldiers. I stated that I would call a surgeon in order to ascertain if they were physically qualified to enlist. I asked them what they proposed to do with their horses, suggesting that if they were serviceable, they would be bought for our service. They then said that they came from the mountains that lay partly in North Carolina and partly in Tennessee; that they wanted to keep their horses and go home upon them once a week. I explained that if they enlisted in our service they could go home only at times when furloughs might be granted them, and that meantime they would be expected to be in camp or with their commands at all times, day and night. This they said they could not agree to. They would be ready at any time to a fight, if their services were required, and this they thought was all that should be required of them. Under such conditions, it is evident that the fifty or more mountaineers did not enlist. This ceremony took place on each of the two or three following days, and I tired of this service.

I did not secure a single recruit, and when our battery was ordered to Blue Springs, I was only too pleased to turn over the office to a captain of infantry, who was as successful recruiting as I had been. Another little episode happened to me just before I entered upon the recruiting service. It became necessary for Captain Buckley to send to Knoxville a commissioned officer to report to General Burnside. Our pickets extended about two miles out from Loudon towards Knoxville, and from Knoxville toward Loudon about the same distance. The railroad was not in use at that time, so it was necessary to make the twenty-six miles outside of our lines.

It was about four P. M., when I learned from the captain that I was the favored officer to report at Knoxville. It was suggested that I need not start until dawn next morning, still I was at liberty to leave at once. I considered the matter a moment and decided to leave that day at dark. There was no moon, but it had all the indications of a bright starlight night. I had my best horse, a thoroughbred Kentuckian, fed at once. I took my sabre and revolver, with a light lunch, and at dark I quietly left

camp for my ride to Knoxville. The road to Knoxville was direct and plain. Nearly half the distance it passed through woodland, with but little underbrush. I decided, as the country outside of our lines was infested with rebel scouts and guerillas, to ride rapidly through the open country, but to walk through the wooded part, as it was so dark there that I could not see. If I walked, I could use the sense of hearing, and so be warned of the approach of either friend or foe. Should I hear advancing steps, I could easily ride out of the road into the woods out of sight, as there were no fences that bordered the road. I met with little adventure. Once, just as I was passing a farmhouse, a voice in the rear, near the house, called out in a loud tone, "halt." I did not obey the order, but touched lightly the flank of my thoroughbred with my spur and he left the house behind like the wind. Two or three times I thought I heard approaching footsteps in the woodland, and I rode a few rods out of the road and waited for a few minutes in expectation, but it proved to be all imagination, and I returned to the road, scratching my face more or less in the branches of the trees.

I had calculated that I could make the ride of thirty miles in about four hours, but in consequence of the slow progress through the woods, it took me much longer, and it was some time after midnight that I discovered several hundred yards ahead of me a fire just outside of the road, partly screened by bushes. I knew that it ought to be a Union picket thrown out by our troops in Knoxville, but I deemed it best to make sure. Most of the way on this road there were few stones, large or small. It was generally a dry loam, and hence a horse though shod, upon the walk would make but little noise. I walked along slowly upon one side of the road towards the fire, ready to turn and race down the road if it should be necessary for my safety. Some additional fuel was cast upon the fire, and it lighted up so that I could distinguish a soldier in our uniform, and I at once went boldly forward. I soon was observed by our picket and duly challenged. After I had given the countersign and shown my pass to the officer in command, I was taken to the picket station and well entertained. Early in the day I reported to General Burnside. When I was about to leave, he questioned

me about my journey from Loudon, and instructed me to return with a column that would leave for Loudon that afternoon. I returned to our camp the next day about 2 P. M., in fair condition.

On October 29th, our battery was parked near Lenoir's Station, on the edge of a fine grove of pine trees. Here we were informed that our winter quarters would be. Our men at once entered upon the construction of log cabins for the command, as well as stables for our animals. This work went rapidly forward, as the pine woods furnished ready and ample material. We also utilized a large barn built of weather beaten boards which stood near our camp. The boards furnished floors for the cabins and roofs for our stables. The roofs of the cabins were covered with paulines. By the 13th of November, the camp was completed and we all looked forward for a pleasant time during the approaching winter.

The scientists of the battery had captured a still on one of their foraging expeditions, and in a week or so more the intention was to furnish a liberal supply of pure whiskey at moderate prices. But "man proposes and God disposes," and on the morning of

the 14th, our short, sweet dream of cosy winter quarters was broken. Soon after reveillé, before the men had fallen into line for roll call, there was the sound of heavy artillery firing at Loudon. We proceeded with the regular camp duties and at the usual time ate our breakfast. Soon we learned the news. General Longstreet, of the Army of Northern Virginia, with his famous corps which had done good service for the rebel arms at Chickamauga, had been sent by General Bragg from Chattanooga to capture Burnside and to clean out the Tennessee and Holston valleys from Southern Tennessee to the southern boundary of Virginia. The veterans of Longstreet had been told that some 15,000 raw troops were scattered from Loudon to Knoxville, who would retreat in confusion at the first appearance of General Longstreet.

It seems that it was not generally known that the Ninth Corps had arrived in the valley. The rebels attempted to lay down a pontoon bridge at Hough's Ferry, a short distance below Loudon. The troops sent to oppose the crossing were from both the Ninth and Twenty-third Corps. The enemy was not a little surprised at the successful resistance which our

troops made to his advance. He was held all day from advancing from the river, and the opinion was that Longstreet would be defeated on the morrow. General Grant had requested General Burnside to maintain himself for a short time, until he, Grant, could fight the battle of Missionary Ridge; then he would promptly send him assistance. General Burnside, it seems, was so confident that he could hold his own with Longstreet, that he proposed to allow Longstreet to cross the Tennessee so that it would not be possible for him to return to General Bragg in time to aid him in the coming fight.

So, on the night of the 14th, it was decided to fall back, and on the 15th General Burnside gave orders to retreat slowly as far as Lenoir's. Our battery remained in camp all this time, ready to move. It was not until 5 P. M., on the 15th, that we began to move on the main road to Campbell's station. This night march was the most horrid of all my nearly four years' experience in the United States Army. Language will fail to do it justice. I was chief of the left section and brought up the rear, or was supposed to. It had rained for twenty-four hours and

the frost was about all out of the ground. The soil was a rich clay, two or three feet in depth. Our horses were not very strong, and after they had dragged the guns and caissons about a mile, their strength was gone.

I was instructed to retreat slowly and in case our rear guard, composed of infantry and cavalry, should find it necessary to make a stand, I was to go into battery. The right and center sections had gone far ahead of me, as the road was not cut up so bad for them, and it literally seemed, in the language of the poet Horace, that the "Devil would take the hindmost." After the first mile we came to a long, deep bed of sticky mud. I rode in advance, and found that about a half mile ahead there was a little knoll of cleared land, comparatively dry, and skirted by a high, worm fence of good oak rails. So I went back and ordered an advance. By pushing hard, we were able to move our tired teams. Before we had made 200 yards, we were stalled. Then we all, non-commissioned officers, privates and myself, put our shoulders to the wheels and made another 200 yards. We were all wet inside by sweat and outside by mud

and water. Never have I seen men do better. At last, somehow, near morning, we reached the knoll, a mile and a half from camp, physically used up. The caissons in front with guns to the rear, we drew up by the roadside and replenished the smouldering fires with rails. Our horses, poor things, were reeling, scarcely able to stand under the weight of their harness.

One of the buglers had been detailed to accompany me, and I sent him forward to report to the captain our condition and to ask for orders. Meantime, the colonel in command of the rear guard sent word that the rebel skirmishers were pressing him hard, and that he could not hold them back much longer. I roused the weary men and sent a sergeant to select an easier way through the fields. Before he reported, the bugler returned with orders from the captain to destroy and throw away my ammunition. I had never disobeyed an order, but in this case I knew that we had a short supply of ammunition for our 12-pound Napoleons in all the Tennessee valley; that guns without ammunition were useless, and so I hesitated. One round was thrown into the mud by a

corporal, who heard the report of the bugler to me. I immediately stopped further destruction and proceeded to place my pieces in battery for opening upon the advancing rebel lines, and I had asked our infantry to unmask our front so that we could have a clear field. I gave the order to "load with solid shot," and immediately my men were as active as ever under the excitement of a fight. Before the order was executed I heard my name called, and an officer reported to me with four fresh, 6-mule teams.

General Burnside had burned a large quartermaster's train in order to save his artillery and its ammunition. The arrival of the mules prevented the destruction of our ammunition and the skirmish which I had arranged. I was informed that I should make all haste, as General McLaw had been sent by the Kingston road to cut off our retreat. The two roads, one from Kingston and one from Loudon, intersected a mile south from Campbell's Station. The drivers unhitched their horses and were sent on ahead in order to be out of our way. As soon as the mules were attached to our guns and caissons, they were started, and away they went, through the deep

mud, up hill and down, until they passed safely the Kingston road about 10 A. M., and we parked in the open field with the rest of our battery.

A sharp fight took place at the junction of these roads, in which our people more than held their own. We made some coffee, ate a little corn bread, and all of us felt young again. My men and myself were still covered with mud. While our battery and its division were halted, columns of troops were rapidly moving forward and deploying north of the village of Campbell's Station. The position was this: Here was an opening in the woods about three miles long from north to south, and from a mile to a mile and a half in width. The south end was higher than the middle. From the middle to the north was quite a rise of from fifty to 100 feet, where was spread out a broad plateau, which commanded the whole open tract of land. The village was in the lowest part of the tract. Upon the plateau at the north, General Burnside was placing a portion of his troops, including three or four light batteries.

Our battery soon had orders to move, and on we went, followed closely by our rear guard, which it-

self was closely pursued by the rebels. Our front line of battle was partially in the village of Campbell's Station, protected very well by the buildings. Our battery did not halt until we arrived upon the plateau. Soon we were assigned a position to protect our extreme right and right flank. After getting into position, we had nothing to do but to observe the movement of the enemy. We soon beheld a splendid exhibition of war. The rebel skirmishers first appeared in the open, carefully examining the ground to find if we had a concealed line of battle near. They soon advanced a half mile or less and found no opposition. There they rested, and we soon saw the rebel columns debouch from both the Loudon and the Kingston roads. At last there came a battery of 20-pounder rifled guns, with several white horses, and went into position on the right of the road.

This battery we had often met in the East. It was one of the batteries of the Washington corps of artillery of New Orleans. This was an excellent battery. The enemy soon formed two strong lines of battle clear across the open country, about 200 yards apart. Light batteries came forward, halting in front, and

took positions between the brigades. On the flanks the cavalry was seen in the open woodland. This scene was all spread out before us. In all our great battles, such as Manassas and Antietam, we rarely saw more than a fourth of a mile of our enemy's line.

About 12 M., the signal was given, and the rebel lines, with flags flying and batteries firing, advanced against us. The fighting for the last forty-eight hours had evidently convinced Longstreet's veterans that they had worthy foes to meet. Four rifled batteries planted upon the brow of the hill, under General Burnside's personal directions, opened rapidly upon the enemy's lines of infantry, paying no attention apparently to the enemy's artillery fire. The very first discharge sent havoc into their first line and killed a color bearer. In five minutes their heavy lines were fearfully torn, but still closing up and keeping up a wonderful alignment they moved right on. To us spectators, it seemed that they would overwhelm our own lines of battle. The enemy had not stopped to fire a rifle, neither had our infantry discharged a piece. Suddenly a change came over the wonderful scene. The Twenty-third Corps opened

with terrific volleys, followed closely by the Ninth. The lines of the rebels halted, opened fire and sought such cover as the surface of the ground afforded them.

Soon the smoke of battle shut in the grand scene and we looked to our own commands. The Washington artillery began throwing over our way its twenty-pounder compliments. As the flank of our battery was nearly in line with the fire from the rebel battery, it seemed sometimes as if they would rake our whole front. Fortunately for us, they did little damage. Lieutenant Benjamin, chief of artillery, paid his special attention to the Washingtonians, and the result was that they were satisfied to keep quiet, one of their guns burst in full view, and this seemed to take their attention away from us.

Soon a regiment or two of the enemy were seen to pass to our extreme right under cover of the skirting woodland and into the wood. At once we were ordered to open fire upon this piece of woodland with shell and shrapnell. We sent twenty-five or thirty shells in rapid succession into the wood, and soon we saw the rebels going to their rear upon the run. It

seems that a portion of the Ninth Corps was in position to enfilade the rebel line, and after they had received a few volleys and our shells they beat a hasty retreat. During the remainder of the battle there was no further trouble on our right flank. This affair on our right flank convinced us that however strong mules were for drawing over heavy roads our artillery, they were not at all well behaved in battle. Of course, as soon as we opened upon the flanking rebels, several batteries of the enemy gave us special attention. The shells burst fast and furious all around us, but it did not interfere with our shelling the woods. I heard deep and loud profanity, and turning around saw my two mule teams start towards each other, and when they met they began to climb up each other.

We had extra men detailed from the infantry to help us manage the mules, and it was from our infantry friends that the loud talk came. After getting up in the air a good distance, the leading pairs of each team fell over. Underneath each was thrown a man. When the rebels retreated from the wood, we ceased firing and our cannoneers went to the assist-

ance of the mule guards. One man was severely bruised, though no bones were broken. We had the mules taken out of the line of the enemy's fire and they soon quieted down. General Longstreet was present in command of his forces, reported to be 20,000 strong. Various assaults were made by him against our lines that November afternoon, but we repulsed them all with heavy loss to him. It was now nearly dark. The plan of General Burnside was to withdraw to Knoxville as soon as he could leave his lines in safety, under cover of night.

All the batteries went to the rear, except Benjamin's, and one section of Buckley's under my command. I was instructed to take orders from Lieutenant Benjamin and not withdraw until he so ordered. His battery was slowly and accurately firing and much annoying the rebel batteries. When it was so dark that one could not see twenty-five yards, he ordered me to withdraw and proceed as fast as possible to Knoxville, not waiting for him. I directed that my right or fifth piece should be first limbered up. The men in charge of the mules that hauled this piece attempted to drive them round to the trail, but

they made only a few steps and then planted their forward feet in the soft ground and stood firm as Gibraltar. The guns were about 100 yards front of them, and I soon decided that it would be easier to run our pieces back by hand than to attempt to move the mules. Men from our division came to our assistance, and we soon had the guns ready for marching.

My caissons, after having supplied from them the expended rounds of ammunition from my gun limbers, had been sent back with the rest of the battery, so that I had only my two guns to care for on my night retreat. My cannoneers were so tired that I allowed them to take turns in riding upon the limbers. This was our second night out and we were all thoroughly exhausted. For thirty hours the men had not slept and had partaken of but little food, mostly a small ration of corn bread. We were preceded by the rest of our battery in Knoxville. I reached Knoxville about 5 o'clock in the morning, and was directed to camp on the right of our two sections just in the rear of Fort Saunders.

There was an Ohio battery attached to the Twenty-

third Army Corps. We made the march with them from Kentucky, and we were not a little chagrined at the way these sons of Ohio overlapped us in foraging. We had no serious difficulty with this command, still we all felt that it was composed principally of the porcine element. When we went to the Ninth Corps we parted company with this battery with regrets, for we felt that we had not been able thus far to even up our accounts with them. This Ohio institution had seen no service except marching and camping. At Campbell's Station, it was in the front line of artillery, first on the left of the Knoxville road in a very prominent position. For a while it was rare fun for these men to rake the rebel lines, but when the rebel artillery opened upon this first line of our batteries, there was a most sudden change in the situation. The Ohioans had a man or two wounded and a caisson blown up. When the explosion occurred, the zeal of the men vanished, from officers and all. The captain limbered his battery to the rear, hauled out into the road and advanced toward Knoxville upon the trot. Whether he had orders to do so or not, we never knew. As

they passed along the road by our battery in position, our men joked them to their hearts' content. It was loudly said that they were after hogs, poultry and sheep. We all felt that Ohio had been settled with, and just as we wanted it to be done. Had this battery seen as much service as the Ninth Army Corps, they never would have done as they did.

We placed our guns in position, as before stated, in the rear and to the right of Fort Saunders. The drivers took care of the mules, and the cannoneers at once dropped upon the ground and slept until aroused to assist in fortifying our position. We were on a commanding ridge looking to the southwest. A section of our battery was to occupy embrasures in the fort. The other two sections were outside and to the right of the fort. This fort was an unfinished rebel earthwork, which commanded the Loudon road, and was named by them Fort Loudon. Col. Orlando Poe was the engineer in charge, and we soon had staked out for us works to be raised to protect our guns. As our men were so wearied out, it was difficult for them to accomplish much in the digging on this 17th of November, 1863, the day

of our arrival. Late in the day details of citizens came upon the ground, and before light the next morning we had excellent protection for our guns. It was reported that General Burnside had taken all males, irrespective of color or politics, and set them to work upon the fortifications around the city.

Knoxville then rested entirely upon an elevated plateau, skirting along the right bank of the Holston river, which is the main branch of the Tennessee. This plateau was divided into three portions by two creeks, named first and second creeks, respectively, from the north. Third creek was just south of our position at Fort Saunders. This name was given the fort about the 20th of November, in honor of Colonel Saunders, who was killed at Armstrong's House. This division of the plateau gave one the impression that the city was built upon three hills. On all prominent points strong works were erected, some of them enclosed. These forts were joined by strong rifle pits. Also there was an inner line of enclosed works. On the left or south bank were several knobs 200 or 300 feet in height. The river was crossed by a pontoon bridge. We had possession of the most

commanding knob, had a good road to its summit and it was well fortified.

We had a large mounted force which operated principally on the left bank of the river. Forage and other supplies were sent down the French Brood and Holston rivers. In fact, during the whole siege, we were never very much interfered with on the south side of the river opposite and above Knoxville. Our force was about 15,000, and that of General Longstreet's 20,000 men. On the 18th we, from Fort Saunders, witnessed a gallant fight for the possession of the Armstrong House, on the Loudon road, about a mile and a half from Saunders. This position was held by 2,000 or 3,000 of our mounted men, and it required the whole force of McLaw to capture the house.

As soon as our forces retreated down the road under cover of our works, the rebels immediately took possession of the house. Lieutenant Benjamin then made a beautiful shot, sending at the first trial a 20-pound shell into the house, setting it on fire. Had the rebels not extinguished the fire the house would have been burned down. On the 20th we erected a

flagstaff and sent up a flag in the fort. This created much enthusiasm all along our line. Our fortifications were greatly strengthened by bales of cotton, covered with green cattle hides. We felt by this time that we could easily hold our own against the enemy.

A house on the north side of the Loudon road, from which its owners had fled, was taken possession of by the enemy's sharpshooters. It was outside of our lines, but was near enough to our fort to cause us much annoyance. General Ferrero, who commanded this portion of the line, decided to capture the house in a night attack. This was made in the evening at 8 o'clock, so quietly and quickly that the enemy were surprised, and some surrendered and some ran away. The house was destroyed.

A little incident occurred in the fort at this time that I have never forgotten. I had held the view, with most others, that it is a matter of instinct for a person to jump or dodge if anything unexpected comes upon him through any one of the senses. Lieutenant S. N. Benjamin, the chief of artillery of the army, often reprimanded his men for dodging, and so did General Ferrero, and General Ferrero told a

story how a soldier was hit when he dodged; had he gone right along the bullet would have missed him. I had noticed Lieutenant Benjamin on several occasions under a warm fire, and he paid no attention to the whistling balls. On the night in question General Ferrero and staff and about every commissioned officer in the fort were standing inside Fort Saunders awaiting the advance of our Seventeenth Michigan regiment upon the house. We had waited several minutes after 8 o'clock, and began to wonder why the attack had not been made. Suddenly there came right at us a heavy volley from the house. This was so unexpected that down went General Ferrero, and Lieutenant Benjamin was almost prone upon the ground. My opinion is that all present dodged more or less, but none so low as the officers named.

On the 21st, Saturday, the work upon the fortifications still went steadily on. The garrison of Fort Saunders consisted principally of the Seventy-ninth New York Highlanders and Benjamin's and Buckley's batteries. Other infantry was close at hand, which could be called upon in an emergency. From the 21st to the 28th nothing unusual occurred. The

enemy seemed to be busy on the south side of the Holston occupying a high knob with artillery, but so far off that we gave it but little attention. With 24-pound howitzers they could nearly reach our own main line. Had he been able to capture the knob which our people had strongly fortified, it would have been very disastrous to us.

Nov. 28, 1863, opened cold and rainy. The outside of the parapet of Fort Saunders was coated with ice. From indications that all observed, it seemed that the assault upon our line was near at hand. The enemy seemed to be pushing troops toward the right of Fort Saunders, and were constantly attempting to force back our pickets in that locality. The location of the several guns of Battery D at 10 p. m., on the 28th, was as follows: the second and sixth pieces were in Battery Galpin, on second creek, enfilading the creek and railroad; the third, fourth and fifth in Fort Saunders, and the first in Battery Noble, on the left of the Loudon road. At 11 p. m., the rebels made a determined attack upon our lines from Battery Galpin to the river, and our battery did considerable firing. This movement of the enemy was

to drive in our pickets and to get as near our main line as possible.

We all knew that by daylight we should be attacked with all the fury which General Longstreet could command. Ammunition was brought up in extra rounds, ready for use. Nobody slept. General Burnside was visiting his troops, especially those in Fort Saunders. Two companies of the Twenty-ninth Massachusetts had been added to the infantry. His staff were all busy directing and encouraging the men. It was not until half past six o'clock on Sunday morning, Nov. 29, 1863, that a signal gun was fired from the enemy's battery on Armstrong's Hill. There was then a lively artillery fire opened from all the enemy's guns in position on both sides of the river. Our artillery made no reply. When the rebel artillery stopped firing we all knew that the assault would promptly follow. We were peering through the fog and smoke and darkness to see the advancing gray lines of the rebel infantry. We well knew that in a minute they might be upon us, as they had crowded up to within 200 yards of Fort Saunders.

In front of the fort telegraph wires had been wound round the stumps of trees lately cut down, and this wire, not being known to the enemy, threw them into much confusion. Lieutenant Benjamin's 20-pounders were not well adapted to the short range required to repel the assault, although they were as well served as any men could serve them, so that it devolved upon the three brass Napoleons of Battery D to do the effective work. As soon as the charging "columns by division closed en masse" of the enemy appeared, Battery D sent in to the columns double rounds of canister at fifty yards. The veterans of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Chickamauga began to quail. It was not possible for them to stand such an onslaught from big guns and rifles. Many fell from the deadly fire and others on account of contact with the entangling wire, but then in the fog and smoke, it was not possible to tell why it was that nearly every man in the first rank fell.

To those brave men it seemed death to advance or retreat, and by force of numbers they pushed on, and some got into the ditch in front of the fort, it being some eight feet deep and twelve feet wide; to the top

of the parapet was at least twenty feet, and the outside of the parapet was covered with smooth ice. When they gained the ditch they were sheltered from our fire. It was not an agreeable duty for our infantry to peer over the top of the parapet to shoot the rebels below, so Lieutenant Benjamin took a number of his shells, lighted the fuses and rolled them over the parapet into the ditch among the enemy. A half dozen explosions of these shells brought them to terms, and soon something as white as anything they had, was raised upon a ramrod. They were told to enter by a certain embrasure, leaving their arms in the ditch. They came along rapidly, about 300 of them, and were marched into Knoxville. The rest of the charging columns fell back, and the battle was at an end. Four brigades, consisting of nineteen regiments, from 4,000 to 6,000 men, were sent forward against Fort Saunders.

News soon came that General Grant had won a decisive victory at Chattanooga, and that General Sherman was rapidly coming to our relief. Joy reigned in Knoxville, and in all the hearts of the thousands of loyal people in East Tennessee.

APPENDIX.

INCIDENTS (PERSONAL).

At Campbell's Station Sergeant Gideon Spencer, of the fourth piece, had a close call. He was taking his piece from its position and passing along the Knoxville road. A high worm fence was standing by the side of the road and one of the slanting stakes in it hung out over the road so that the sergeant on horseback had to turn his head over to the right in order to avoid a collision. Just as he turned the head, a 20-pound shell came from the Washington artillery and cut off the stake, opposite the sergeant's head. In this case, dodging paid.

During the siege of Knoxville Private William Oakes was down in a ravine near the teams. A bullet fired from the rebel lines came over and passed through his head just above the tongue, carrying away two or three of his teeth. He was in a hospital a short distance away, and the next day after he was

wounded I went to see him. I found him with his cheeks swollen to an enormous size. I shook his hand and expressed my regret at his misfortune, and hoped that he would soon be out of the hospital, etc. I did not think that he could articulate. I saw that he was about to speak, or to attempt it, and so I leaned over to catch his words. He managed to say in a distressed voice that he was unable to eat popcorn. I thought that he would get back to Rhode Island, and told him so.

While lying with my section on the right of Fort Saunders, on a cold, wet day, the colonel commanding the brigade to which I was attached directed his quartermaster to furnish me with a tent. There was sent round an old sibley tent and my men pitched it a short distance in rear of the line, on a slightly elevated dry patch of ground. I went inside, but found that as the top of the tent was above our parapet, the rebels were shooting bullets through the top in a lively manner. I went outside and estimated about how low the shots could come through the tent. I made a mark on the inside, and those who happened to be in the tent kept heads below the line. The

colonel referred to this line as the dead line. A soldier brought to me a beautiful copy of the works of the Latin poet, Virgil, and I spent the time in reading his poetic account of the siege of "Lofty Illium."

On the morning of the great assault upon our lines, Sergeant Charles C. Gray was in charge of the fourth piece of our battery. He often loaded his piece with double canister and fired with terrible effect, for the range was only from fifteen yards to fifty yards. He moved his piece from its first position en barbette on the right of the fort, to an embrasure that more effectually commanded the rebel advance. Here he fired with great rapidity, until the enemy appeared to recoil. He had his gun loaded with double canister and ceased firing. At this time a rebel officer climbed out of the ditch, and standing at the muzzle of the cannon placed his sword upon it and said: "Surrender this gun." The man who held the lanyard was ready to fire, and asked for the order. Sergeant Gray replied: "Don't waste double canister on one man." At this juncture, three other rebels came into the embrasure at the muzzle of the gun, and then the order was given to "fire." Of these

four men, nothing was left but atoms. The brave sergeant was publicly thanked and congratulated by General Burnside a few hours later. The Governor of Rhode Island, at the general's request, sent him a commission as second lieutenant. This case is unique. Nothing but the stout heart of Sergeant Gray made him a commissioned officer. He owed his promotion to no political or personal influence with the Governor of Rhode Island.

Sergeant Frank Tucker, of Battery D, was a cool, brave man, and the best shot in the whole battery. Some 600 or 700 yards from our lines, just in the edge of a piece of woodland, a rebel sharpshooter, with a big target rifle that sent explosive bullets, had secreted himself in a pine tree. A number of men had been killed by him. General Ferrero had barely escaped a bullet through his head. The general sent for me, as my section was in position nearly opposite the sharpshooter, and requested me to open fire upon him. I stated that nothing would please me better, but as Lieutenant Benjamin had ordered me to waste no ammunition, I did not feel that he would permit me to open fire on one man. He gave

me a written order to proceed, and so I went back to my section to carry out the order. We placed a cap upon a ramrod and slowly raised it above our parapet. I looked through a field glass while the men looked with naked eyes. The cap had no sooner come above the parapet than a ball was put through it. We all saw the smoke about ten or fifteen feet from the ground. I directed Sergeant Tucker to load with solid shot, to take his time about computing distance, elevation of piece, and aiming it. When he had the gun ready, we once more raised the cap, and promptly the bullet came. The sergeant had his piece ready aimed and he quickly said "fire." The next I saw the pine tree break off and topple over, and down fell a man with his gun in his hand. Our men sent up a great shout. General Ferrero was delighted with such an exhibition of marksmanship. I noticed that as soon as the reb. struck the ground he jumped up and ran into the thicket to the rear of his tree. I said nothing about this, and it was understood that Tucker had dropped his man at the first fire.

Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society
of Rhode Island

CONFEDERATE
LOSS IN ASSAULT UPON FORT LOUDON,
ALIAS SAUNDERS ON NOVEMBER 29, 1863.

Killed, 129. Wounded, 458.
Missing, 226. Aggregate, 813.

See War of the Rebellion, Official Records, Vol. 31, Part
I, page 475.

General Burnside makes Confederate total loss about 500.

See *Ibid* page 270.

Union entire loss about 20, *Ibid* page.

In the assault upon Fort Saunders, November 29, 1863, I
do not find that Battery "D" suffered any loss.

E. K. PARKER.

By GEORGE R. SHERMAN

(Captain Seventh United States Colored Infantry and
Brigadier-General United States Volunteers)

Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society
of Rhode Island

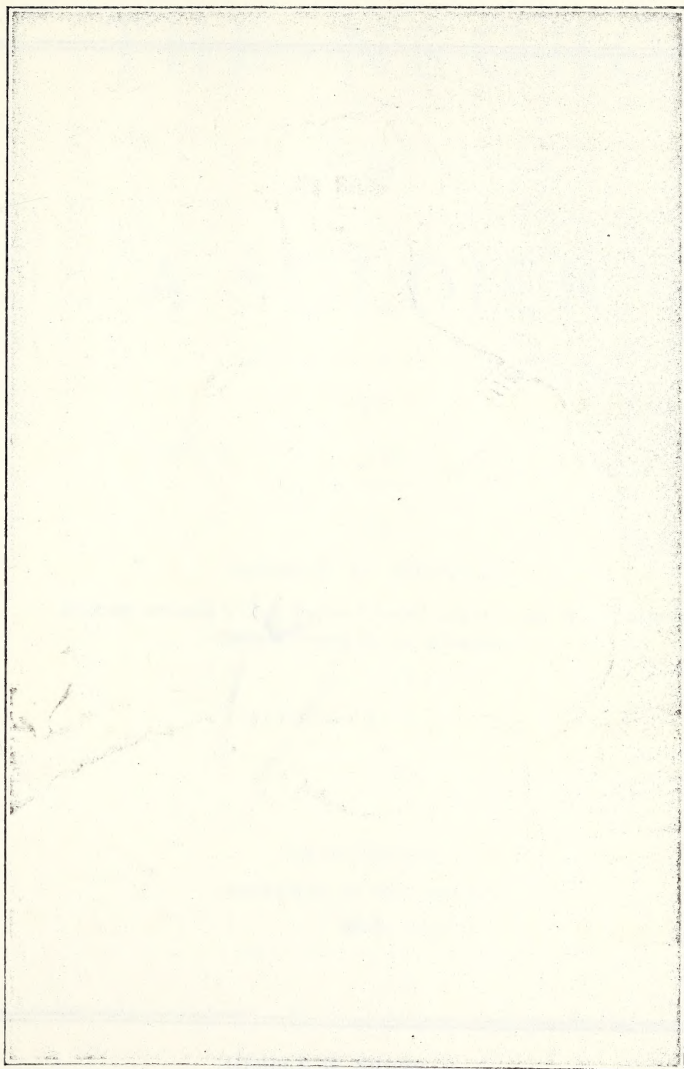
Personal Narratives

SEVENTH SERIES, No. 7

THE NEGRO AS A SOLDIER

By GEORGE R. SHERMAN

[Captain Seventh United States Colored Infantry and
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[Captain, Twenty-Fifth Colored Infantry and Tenth Cavalry,
United States Volunteers.]

PROVIDENCE,

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THE NEGRO AS A SOLDIER.

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WHEN we remember that in all the wars of our country, negroes have always shown that they were able and willing to fight, and that patriotism burned brightly in their hearts, though they were usually looked upon and treated as chattels, that at Bunker Hill, standing shoulder to shoulder with the white yeomanry of the colonies, negroes stood firmly, and bore their part bravely; that a Rhode Island regiment of manumitted slaves did valiant service for their state and country in the Revolutionary War; that as early as June 28, 1778, negroes were to be found serving in as many as eighteen brigades under Washington; that at New Orleans, in the war of

*For many of the facts here related I am indebted to a paper by William Elliot Furness, Major of the Eighth Regiment United States Colored Troops, which had been read by him before the Illinois Commandery of the Loyal Legion; and by his permission I have copied copiously therefrom.

1812, Jackson appealed to the patriotism of negro soldiers and was materially aided by them, and that always, from the day when John Paul Jones first hoisted the Stars and Stripes, colored men have served in our navy on equal terms with their white brothers, it is a matter of wonder and amazement that all the military history of negro service was apparently overlooked or ignored at the beginning of the War of the Rebellion, and that our Government was so slow to avail itself, as it might have done much earlier, of the efficient aid of more than a quarter of a million of colored men ready and willing to respond at call. But very few, even of those who had been the most steadfast friends of the down-trodden race, believed that negroes were able to meet their masters on the field of battle; probably because black men had cowered for so many years beneath the blows of their overseers that their spirit was supposed to be crushed out, and a deed of negro heroism, except of passive, suffering endurance, was beyond the faith even of ardent Abolitionists.

Nobody turned back the pages of history and read of the heroism and military success of the blacks of

Hayti, who defeated the heroes of Hohenlinden, the flower of the French army, who won for their leader Toussaint L'Ouverture, a negro slave, the title of "The Black Napoleon," and gained freedom for themselves and independence for their country.* Nor did any one peruse the annals of the far past, which tell how the black contingents of the armies of the Pharaohs fought with courage in no way inferior to that of their lighter skinned companions-in-arms.

No, for our negroes were but the humble servants of masters who were sometimes indulgent, but often cruel, the born slaves of a more fortunate race, and were considered unworthy of recognition in any other capacity. They were supposed to be but little higher in the scale of animated nature than apes or gorillas, and their value was reckoned as one would estimate that of his horse or ox, by the money they would bring on the auction block, or by the utility of the work they could be expected to perform with-

* Of Toussaint L'Ouverture it has been said by Goodwin in his lectures, that the West India Islands, since their first discovery by Columbus, could not boast of a single name which deserved comparison, with this negro chieftain of Hayti.

out compensation from their masters; while north of Mason and Dixon's line they were regarded by many with aversion and often with loathing.

While the people of the North, for a long time seemed to ignore or overlook the possibility of enlisting many thousand efficient recruits from the enslaved race, that race itself appears never to have faltered in its faith that victory for the Union army would bring enfranchisement with it. The negroes knew, as if by intuition, that their fate hung on the success or defeat of the hosts of the North, and they waited in prayerful patience for the expected day of jubilee. Their patience, under the circumstances, redounds to their eternal honor; no treacherous servile uprising, no barbarous slaughter of women and children in the rear of the Confederate forces tarnished the good name of these enslaved men, and their first acts of hostility to their masters and first service to the government of the United States were performed under the flag of the Union, when called upon by the highest authority to take arms in its defence. Not until the muskets of the national government were placed in their hands did they presume to

meet their rebellious masters in war, and then they struck valiant blows and shrank not from any duty which brave Christian soldiers should perform.

During the first year of the war no voice was raised in behalf of the slaves, nor were they allowed any share in the performance of the most pressing duties of the time. Generals issued orders for the return of fugitive slaves to their masters, and prohibited negroes from entering the lines of the armies in the field. Wherever the Union forces moved, slaveholders did not hesitate to reclaim their chattels, and the free soldiers of the North were expected to aid them in so doing. But this service soon began to shock the sense of justice of the soldiers, and here and there commanders would connive at the escape, or would openly protect from recapture the slaves who had thrown themselves upon their mercy; and later, when reverses came, when the battle lists of losses grew longer and longer, when every village throughout the land was in mourning, when the government began to see that the conflict would prove something more than a few months' pastime, and when the country at large commenced to realize the

magnitude of the task it had undertaken to perform, then the project of arming the negroes was seriously thought of and discussed.

For a long time the enlistment of colored men was bitterly opposed by many civil as well as military officers; indeed, it was not until the closing years of the war that the negroes' right to fight for the common country was universally acknowledged, and even the tardy recognition of their services in *conquering* the Confederates and of their soldierly qualities and bravery on the field of battle has been literally wrung from unwilling witnesses.

Time would fail, to note in detail General Hunter's experiment in organizing negro troops in South Carolina, or that of General Phelps and General Butler in Louisiana, and only a hasty review can be given of a few of the incidents that led up to the employment of the much despised race as soldiers.

In March, 1862, Congress added a new provision to the Articles of War, forbidding officers and soldiers from returning fugitive slaves. In the following June the slaves of those actually engaged in rebellion were declared free, and in July, of the same

year, President Lincoln was authorized to accept negroes for any service. About a month later, the Secretary of War, for the first time, authorized the raising of negro troops, by directing General Rufus Saxton to arm, uniform, equip and receive into the service of the United States such numbers of volunteers of African descent as he might deem expedient, not exceeding five thousand, and to detail officers to instruct and command them. In September, the Union victory at Antietam so strengthened the administration that the President at once issued his preliminary Emancipation, which was to go into effect January 1, 1863; and after that step all logical objection to using the negroes as a military factor ceased.

On January 1, 1863 (now just fifty years ago), President Lincoln issued his final Emancipation Proclamation, and the project of making use of the negroes as soldiers was then considered more favorably; but not until the 22d of May following was the Bureau of Colored Troops established in the War Department. The tide then fully turned, for the government itself undertook the work of recruiting and organizing the new military force.

By the close of the year 1863 fully fifty thousand colored troops had been organized, the number being trebled within a year; and when the end came, there had been enrolled a total of 178,975 of these men in the Union Army. Every northern state east of the Rocky Mountains, except Nebraska, is credited with them, and nearly 100,000 were raised in the states which had seceded.

When the enlistment of colored men was fairly begun, the Confederate Congress passed an Act, the fourth section of which reads as follows:

"That every white person, being a commissioned officer, or acting as such, who, during the present war, shall command negroes or mulattoes in arms against the Confederate States, or who shall arm, train, organize or prepare negroes or mulattoes for military service against the Confederate States, or who shall voluntarily aid negroes or mulattoes in any military enterprise, attack, or conflict in such service, shall be deemed as inciting servile insurrection, and shall, if captured, be put to death, or be otherwise punished at the discretion of the Court."

Another section provided: "That all negro slaves

captured in arms be at once delivered over to the executive authorities of the respective states to which they belong, to be dealt with according to the laws of said states."

In view of this proclamation of outlawry, and of their knowledge that, if captured, they could not expect the same treatment as white men, the voluntary enlistment of so many slaves gives conclusive evidence of their having far more than ordinary courage and nerve. It shows that they were willing to put themselves in a position of the utmost peril to serve their country in its time of greatest need, and it also demonstrates their unfaltering faith that victory to the North would bring enfranchisement to their race.

The organization of the First Regiment of United States Colored Troops was begun in the District of Columbia, May 19, 1863, and about the same time a Board for the examination of officers of colored troops was appointed in the East, with Major-General Casey as its president, and another for the West, to hold its sessions at Nashville. That the labors of these Boards contributed very materially to the suc-

cess of the experiment of employing this class of soldiers, no one acquainted with the facts can doubt. In almost every instance, I believe, the officers placed in command of colored troops were selected from officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates who had seen active service. No outside influence, whether social, political or military, had any undue weight with the examining board. Every candidate had to stand upon his own merit. In some cases field officers failed to pass as second lieutenants. Of seven hundred and forty candidates examined by General Casey's board, prior to Feb. 2, 1864, three hundred and thirty-three were rejected, two hundred and two were recommended for second lieutenants, one hundred and one for first lieutenants, seventy-two for captains, eighteen for majors, eight for lieutenant-colonels, and only six were found equal to the responsibilities of colonel.

It was the writer's privilege, after two years' service in the Eighty-First Regiment New York Volunteers, to be assigned to the Seventh Regiment United States Colored Troops, with which he served a full three years' term.

In considering the qualifications of negroes for service as soldiers, all authorities admit that they are quick to learn the manual of arms and the evolutions of the army drill. In these they took great pride and pleasure, and when well uniformed their appearance was always good. They endured the hardships of camp and marches with a cheerful patience which was very pleasing to their officers, and it was particularly noticed on many occasions, that their percentage of stragglers on the march was phenomenally small.

Aug. 19, 1864, Major-General David B. Birney, commanding the Tenth Army Corps, in general orders, complimented the colored troops, viz.:

"To the colored regiments, recently added to us and fighting with us, the Major-General tenders his thanks for their uniform good conduct and soldierly bearing. They have set a good example to our veterans by the entire absence of straggling from their ranks on the march."

Their long service as slaves and servants made them obedient and easily subject to their officers, and very few deserted or became insubordinate. It

has been said that they were not so able to endure the fatigue of a long march as were the white soldiers, but the fact that they straggled less than white soldiers refutes that assertion. From my experience, in further contradiction of that statement, I will add that of my company, after marching thirty miles in Florida on the twenty-fifth day of July, 1864, every man who started with us in the morning was present to answer to his name when we halted at night for bivouac. They endured hunger more patiently than other troops of our army and were found to be as healthy generally.

The enlisted men of my regiment were mostly slaves from the plantations of those counties of Maryland and Virginia which lie east of the Chesapeake Bay. These recruits came to us ignorant of books, without interest in anything outside their own plantation world; they were ignorant of everything except to obey. Very few could read a word, and excepting only a few free born men, scarcely one could write his name. To compensate for these disadvantages, there was at once manifested by them great eagerness to learn their duties, and an interest

in them that could not be excelled. They gave themselves up to the work before them, wholly and without reserve, while the officers of the regiment seemed imbued with an earnest determination and a common ambition to make the regiment second to none. To this end the latter labored unceasingly, not in matters of drill and discipline only, but also to remedy, as far as possible, their almost total lack of education. Classes were organized in each company for the non-commissioned officers, and they would go out among the men to teach them the A, B, C; and except when military duty prevented, these classes were kept up almost to the day of discharge. It was an interesting sight, that might have been witnessed almost every day during the first year, to see groups of five or six men gathered around a primer or spelling book, learning the alphabet, and as time passed on, to see those same men writing letters to their friends, or reading a book or paper.

When the regiment was disbanded, after a full three years' service, nearly all of them could read, a large percentage could write fairly well, and many had acquired considerable knowledge of the elemen-

tary branches, and, what was of even greater importance, all had learned self-reliance and self-respect, and went back to their homes with views enlarged, ambition aroused, and their interest in the outside world thoroughly awakened.

After the regiment was in fair working order, the officers sought to teach their men the value of money and induce them to save their earnings. The success of their efforts in that important direction is attested by the fact that when the regiment was mustered out nearly \$90,000 stood to their credit in savings institutions in Baltimore and Washington.

Not only were the men remarkable for their temperate habits, cases of drunkenness being very rare, but they were quiet and orderly as well, and their freedom from the use of profane and obscene language was remarkable.

For these reasons, it seems the negro soldier must be admitted to be fully equal, in all respects, to soldiers of other races and colors, particularly if it can be shown that he has stood the supreme test of battle by taking and maintaining his position side by side and shoulder to shoulder with his fellow white

soldiers,—facing the same enemy, with the same dogged persistence; storming the same fortifications, with the same undaunted heroism, and resisting the assaults of the common enemy with equal courage and efficiency.

At the battle of Rhode Island, Aug. 29, 1778, according to Arnold, the Rhode Island historian, “the newly raised black regiment of manumitted slaves, commanded by Col. Christopher Greene, justified the highest hopes of its leaders and contributed in no small degree to the favorable result of that sanguinary contest. Posted in a grove in a valley, and headed by their Major, Samuel Ward, they three times drove back the Hessians, who strove desperately and vainly to dislodge them. So bloody was the struggle that, on the day after the battle, the Hessian colonel who had led these repeated charges, applied for a change of command because he dared not lead that regiment again into action, lest they should shoot him for causing so great a loss of life.” You will remember it is stated this was a “newly raised black regiment,” probably they were poorly prepared by drill and discipline for such a desperate contest, but they three times drove back the enemy.

I have seen escaping slaves fresh from Southern plantations come into the Union army as recruits. We have later noticed their soldierly bearing, fidelity, and endurance; we have been with them on the march, in the bivouac, and on picket and fatigue duty, and have observed with deep respect and admiration their unyielding firmness and self-sacrificing valor on the skirmish line and amid the whirlwind shock of battle, while cannon were roaring far and near, in front, to the right and to the left; when great trees were being splintered, broken and crushed as if smitten by the bolts of heaven; when whistling, singing bullets were flying thick about them, and comrades were falling all around us, but I never have seen one of them show the least sign of cowardice.

We once saw a white regiment, its ammunition exhausted, just as the Confederates charged with their famous wild yell, break ranks in confusion and flee in disorder through the Union lines. We saw the Seventh Regiment of United States Colored Troops sent to the relief of the fleeing whites. We saw them advance in perfect order, with the steady

ness of veterans, without discharging a musket until the order to fire was given, and then they met the rushing charge of the foe as a rock receives and rolls back the surges of the ocean.*

I was with the same regiment on Sept. 29, 1864, when Companies C. D. G and K, were placed under the command of Captain Julius A. Weiss, and ordered to charge and capture a fort in our front. When the order was received the Captain exclaimed, "What, capture a fort with a skirmish line? Who ever heard of such a thing? We'll try, but it can't be done." It proved to be Fort Gilmer, on the main line of Confederate defense, about six and a half miles from Richmond. A white regiment, the Ninth Maine, had just been repulsed in a charge on the same fort.

I had been transferred from Company F the evening before to command Company C, expecting promotion as its Captain. Advancing as skirmishers we soon encountered a heavy fire of shell and shrapnel, not from the fort in our front *alone*, but also

* See also history of Seventh Regiment United States Colored Troops.

from one on our right flank, which was quickly followed by canister, and soon supplemented by musketry, the instant it could be utilized. Almost at the same moment the order to charge was given, and we dashed forward, soon to find ourselves plunging into a ditch fully seven feet deep, and twice that width. Pausing only for a breathing spell, the men helped one another up the interior, and nearly perpendicular wall of the ditch, until sixty or more had climbed to the foot of the parapet, and, upon signal, all attempted to scale and storm it. A volley from muskets whose muzzles almost touched us, and whose bullets penetrated the brains or breasts of many of those who showed themselves above the exterior crest, drove them instantly back, tumbling many into the ditch. Hand grenades were also thrown among us, some of which were caught by the men and hurled back at the enemy. The assaulting party was soon rendered perfectly helpless and we were compelled to surrender.

All of the four companies except two lieutenants who skulked and one man who escaped from the ditch, were either killed, wounded or captured. One

man escaped from the ditch and ran back to the regiment unobserved by our captors, during the excitement attending the surrender, and the transfer of our personal effects to the possession of the victors. One of the prisoners was claimed as a slave, and was delivered over to his would-be master.

Of the 150 enlisted men who started, 51, or over 32 per cent, were killed or mortally wounded; a loss exceeding that of any other command in a single engagement, during the entire war.

Oct. 11, 1864, General Butler issued a General Order, in which he complimented the colored soldiers of his command, viz.:

"The colored soldiers, by coolness, steadiness and dash, have silenced every cavil of the doubters of their soldierly capacity, and drawn tokens of admiration from their enemies—have brought their late masters, even, to the consideration of the question whether they will not employ as soldiers the hitherto despised race."

For further interesting reports of this remarkable assault by colored troops on one of the strongest forts on the defenses of Richmond, the following accounts from both the

Union and Confederate side, are reprinted from *Personal Narratives, No. 7, Fifth Series*.

The report of Capt. Weiss, says:

"Upon receiving the order to charge the fort, I at once, about one o'clock P. M., ordered the four companies, on the right of the regiment, twenty-five or thirty paces to the front where a slight depression in the ground screened them from the eyes, if not the projectiles, of the enemy. After being deployed by the flank on the right of the second company, the command advanced in ordinary quick step against the objective point. Emerging from the swale into view, it became at once the target for a seemingly redoubled fire, not only from the fort in front, but also from the one on its right. The fire of the latter had been reported silenced, but instead, from its position to the right oblique, it proved even more destructive than that of the one in front.

"Both forts were most advantageously situated for defense, at the extremity of a plain, variously estimated at from five hundred to seven hundred yards, the surface of which afforded at no point shelter from view or shot to an assailing party. The forts were connected by a curtain of rifle-pits containing a re-entrant angle, thus providing for a reciprocal enfilading fire in case either was attacked.

"The nature of the ground and the small altitude of the ordnance above the level of the plain, also made the fire in the nature of a ricochet.

"As the party advanced the enemy's shell and shrapnel were exchanged for canister, followed soon by a lively rattle of musketry. When within range of the latter, and after having traversed about three-fourths of the distance, the order to charge was given and obeyed with an alacrity that seemed to make the execution almost precede the order.

For a moment, judging from the slacking of their fire, the enemy seemed to be affected by a panicky astonishment, but soon recovering, they opened again with canister and musketry, which, at the shorter range, tore through the ranks with deadlier effect.

"In a few minutes the ditch of the fort was reached. It was fully seven feet deep and twelve to fourteen wide, the excavated material sufficing for the embankments of the fort. Some one hundred and twenty men and officers precipitated themselves into it, many losing their lives at its very edge. After a short breathing spell men were helped up the exterior slope of the parapet on the shoulders of others, and fifty or sixty being thus disposed an attempt was made to storm the fort. At the signal all rose, but the enemy, lying securely sheltered behind the interior slope, the muzzles of their guns almost touching the storming party, received the latter with a crushing fire, sending many into the ditch below shot through the brain or breast. Several other attempts were made with like results, till at least forty or fifty of the assailants were writhing in the ditch below or resting forever.

"The defense having been obviously reinforced meanwhile from other points not so directly attacked, and having armed the gunners with muskets, it was considered impolitic to attempt another storm with the now greatly reduced force on hand, especially as the cessation of the artillery fire of the fort was considered a sufficient hint to the commander of the Union forces that the attacking party had come to close quarters and were proper subjects for reinforcements. No signs, however, of the latter appearing, it was decided to surrender, especially as the enemy had now commenced to roll lighted short fuse shells among the stormers, against which there was no defense.

"Seven officers and from seventy to eighty enlisted men delivered up their arms to an enemy gallant enough to have fought for a better cause.

A correspondent of the *Richmond Whig* under date of Oct. 6, 1864, gives the following account of what he saw and heard, on his visit to Fort Gilmer a few days after the assault:

"When the writer hereof turns to look upon the traces of the carnage of the 29th ult., standing upon Fort Gilmer's parapet, he looks upon forty odd stark figures that are lying below—the forms of Butler's slain black soldiers. They are shot in the head, the heart, and wherever it is fatal to be struck.

"A sturdy artillery man near by volunteers the information: 'These fellows fought well, sir. They came up at double-quick, with their guns at right shoulder-shift, and leaped into the ditch. Then they began to assist one another up the parapet, and here,' pointing to the spot, 'many of them were shot down upon the edge. Our men threw hand grenades among them, and these assisted us in killing many. We heard one of them cry in the ditch, 'Look out for the hand bombs,' and that fellow you see lying there was bending over one of them to pick it up, and throw it back at us, as others had done, when it exploded and blew the top of his head off.'"

The *Southern Historical Society* on page 441, Volume 1, of its publications gives an account of the assault on Fort Gilmer, written by one who says he saw the whole of it:

"Fort Gilmer was on a hill, with quite an extensive flat in front. The Louisiana Guard Artillery on the left, and the Salem Artillery on the right of the fort, occupied re-

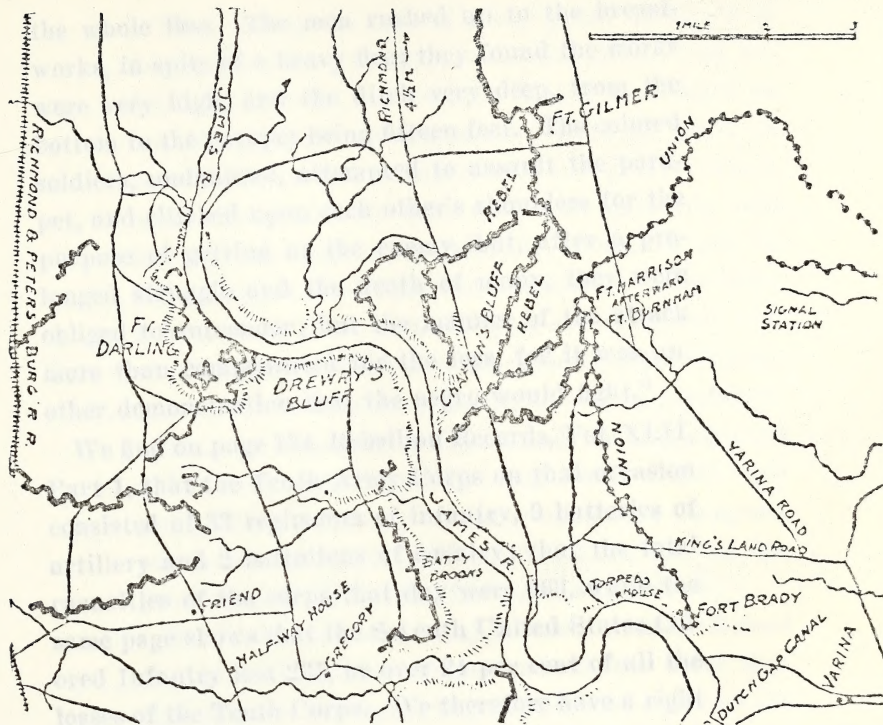
doubts so constructed that each had an enfilade fire upon the Yankees as they advanced. The enemy came rather cautiously at first, but finally they came with a rush, our artillery firing shrapnel at first, but they soon began to load with canister, and the way those negroes fell before it was very gratifying to the people on our side of the works. But the Yankees came on until they got to the ditch in front of Fort Gilmer—a dry ditch about ten feet deep and twelve feet wide. Into this ditch a great many of the negroes jumped, and endeavored to climb upon each other's shoulders, but were beaten back by our infantry, and almost all of them killed. One negro who was either drunk or crazy, crawled through a culvert which ran from the inside of the fort into the ditch, and was shot on the inside.

"Thus ended the battle of Fort Gilmer, and there was no more fighting done on this part of the line that day.

"Had our troops given way upon that day, and I think if the Yankees had known how near they were to Richmond we must have been beaten, for there was nothing between us and the city, and instead of being burned by our men as it afterwards was, Richmond must have fallen into the hands of 'Beast Butler' and his negroes."

On another page he says: "The truth is, that upon that same 29th of September, Richmond came nearer being captured, and that too, by negro troops, than it ever did during the whole war, and but for the devotion and bravery of two decimated brigades, consisting of about three hundred men each, the Yankees must have carried everything before them and captured Richmond."

Of this assault General Benjamin F. Butler, in his autobiography, page 736, says:



FORT GILMER.

4½ miles from Richmond.

Fort Gilmer was the salient point in the line, and its occupation would have caused the evacuation of

the whole line. The men rushed up to the breast-works, in spite of a heavy fire; they found the works were very high, and the ditch very deep, from the bottom to the parapet being fifteen feet. The colored soldiers, undaunted, attempted to assault the parapet, and climbed upon each other's shoulders for the purpose of getting at the enemy, but, after a prolonged struggle and the death of many, they were obliged to surrender; but the manner of the attack more than compensated for the loss, for it was an other demonstration that the negro would fight."

We find on page 134, Rebellion Records, Vol. XLII, Part 1, that the Tenth Army Corps on that occasion consisted of 33 regiments of infantry, 9 batteries of artillery and 2 battalions of cavalry; that the total casualties of the corps that day were 963, while the same page shows that the Seventh United States Colored Infantry lost 235, or over 24 per cent of all the losses of the Tenth Corps. We therefore have a right to claim for a colored regiment the lion's share of,

General R. S. Foster's congratulatory order to the Tenth Army Corps, as given on page 801, Part III, Vol. XLII, "Records of the Rebellion":

"But among the last of those grand carnivals of death, in which you displayed such gallant and unflinching bravery, the assault upon Fort Gilmer on the twenty-ninth of September, when so many of your brave comrades found soldiers' graves; when, amid the lead and iron hail, you gallantly and bravely, although unsuccessfully, assaulted one of the strongest works on the continent,—'twas there I learned of what material you are composed, and of what gallant deeds you are capable of performing.

All this outspoken attestation of commendation, coming as it does from friend and foe alike, cannot reflect more credit upon the negro as a soldier than the indirect testimony of the Confederate Congress, which passed a bill in December, 1864, for the impressment of slaves into the Confederate army.

When that bill was being debated, General Robert E. Lee said: "Fort Gilmer proved, the other day, that negroes will fight; they raised each other on the parapet to be shot at as they appeared above."

The *Richmond Examiner*, of Dec. 24, 1864, referring to the bill which had then passed one branch of the Confederate Congress, said that it might very

properly be amended and enlarged in the other branch by placing at the disposal of the military authorities not only 40,000 negroes, but 80,000, or even 100,000, and leaving it to General Lee, at his discretion and according to the exigencies of the service, to use them in any way he might think useful.

While we remember that 36,847 colored soldiers gave up their lives in the struggle for National preservation; when we think of Fort Gilmer, Milliken's Bend, Port Hudson, Nashville, Olustee, the Crater of Petersburg, Fort Wagner, and many other engagements with the Confederates in which they participated, and in all of which they acquitted themselves with credit, as testified to by an almost endless number of official reports published by our government in the "Rebellion Records," and also by a multitude of unwilling witnesses whose prejudices were overcome by numerous instances of almost unexampled gallantry which came within their personal observation, we realize that the evidence is conclusive, that the negro troops recruited and organized by the government to aid in the suppression of the Rebellion were fully as capable as the troops of other races to perform the duties of soldiers.

Gen. B. F. Butler, in his final address to the soldiers of his command, pays this tribute to the colored soldiers:

"In this army you have been treated as soldiers, not as laborers.

"You have shown yourselves worthy of the uniform you wear.

"The best officers of the Union seek to command you.

"Your bravery has won the admiration of those who would be your masters.

"Your patriotism, fidelity and courage have illustrated the best qualities of manhood.

"With the bayonet you have unlocked the iron-barred gates of prejudice, and opened new fields of freedom, liberty, and equality of right to yourselves and to your race."

Ever since the close of the Civil War colored soldiers have formed a part of our regular army. It fell to the lot of the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry regiments to prove that negroes could do as well under fire in the Indian wars as they had when fighting for the freedom of their race; they scouted for years against

hostile Indians in Texas, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona, taking a conspicuous part in running to earth Geromnimo's and Victoria's bands of Apaches. In the war with Spain, in the battle of Santiago, the four regiments of colored regulars, the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry, and the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Infantry, won praise from all sides, particularly for their advance on San Juan and Kettle Hills. From the very beginning of the movement of the army after its landing in Cuba, the negro troops were in the front of the fighting, and contributed largely to the successful result. Although they sustained heavy losses, the men fought with the same gallantry they had displayed on the plains, as is attested by the honors awarded. In every company there were instances of personal gallantry. These four regiments of negroes also served with great credit in the Philippines, and the Inspector General of the Army reported in 1902 that "the Twenty-fifth Infantry is the best regiment I have seen in the Philippines;" not the best *colored* regiment, mark you, but the *best* regiment.

I believe every candid person will agree with me, that our colored soldiers have deserved well of the Republic, for as Dunbar, the colored poet, has said:

“When war, in savage triumph,
Spread abroad its funeral pall—
Then you called the colored soldiers,
And they answered to your call.

And like hounds unleashed and eager
For the life blood of the prey,
Sprung they forth and bore them bravely
In the thickest of the fray.

And where'er the fight was hottest,
Where the bullets fastest fell,
There they pressed, unblanched and fearless,
At the very mouth of hell.

And their deeds shall find a record
In the registry of fame;
For their blood has cleansed completely
Every blot of Slavery's shame.

So all honor and all glory
To those noble sons of Ham,—
The gallant colored soldiers
Who fought for Uncle Sam.”

Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society
of Rhode Island

Personal Narratives

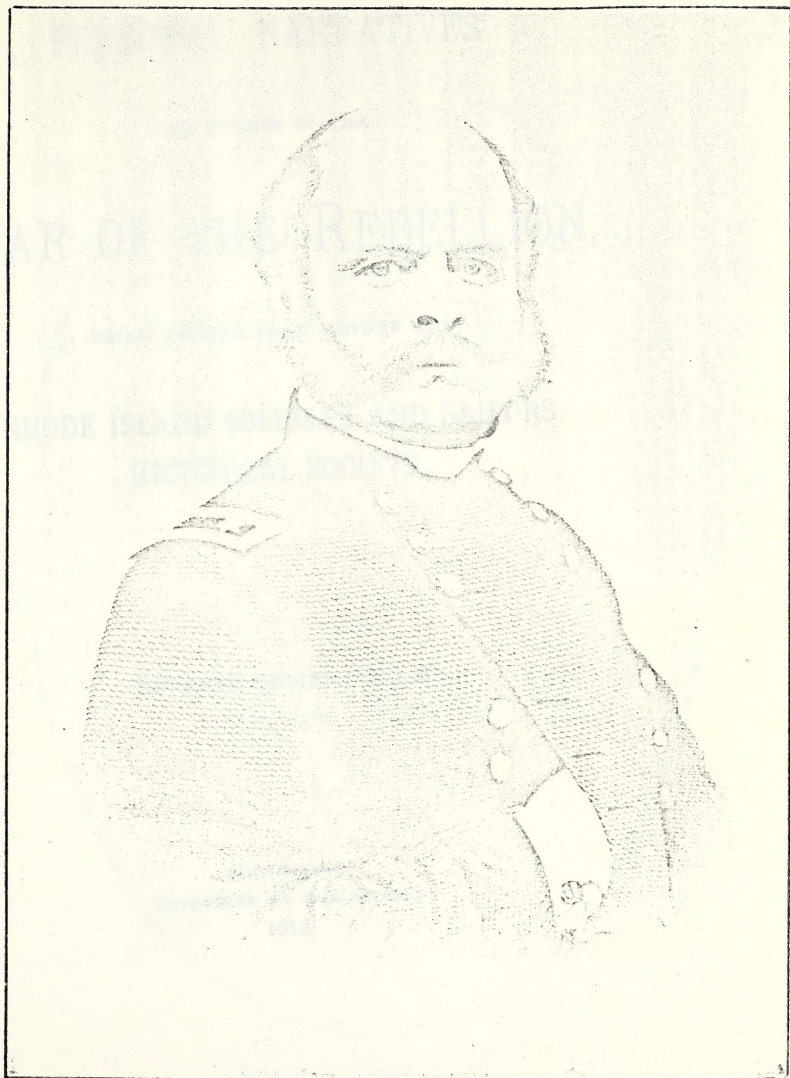
SEVENTH SERIES, No. 8

The Military Services of
Major-General Ambrose Everett Burnside
in the Civil War

PART I

By DANIEL R. BALLOU

[Late Second Lieutenant 12th Regt. R. I. Volunteer Infantry.]

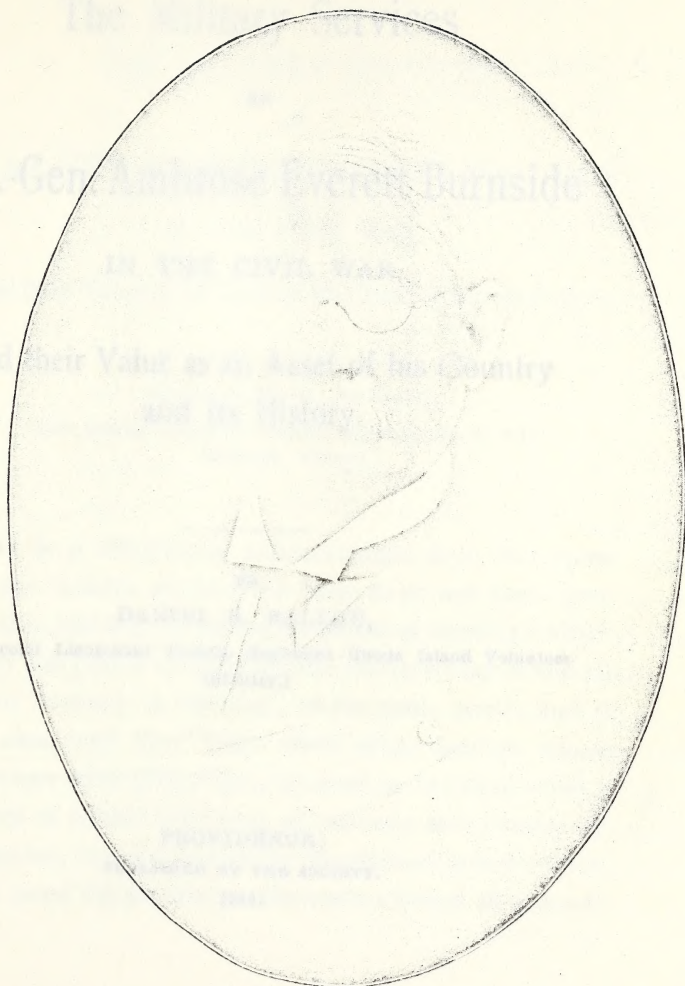


PERSONAL NARRATIVES
OF EVENTS IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION,

BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE
RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

SEVENTH SERIES.—No. 8.

PROVIDENCE:
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1914.



LIEUTENANT DANIEL R. BALLOU

The Military Services

OF

Maj.-Gen. Ambrose Everett Burnside

IN THE CIVIL WAR,

And their Value as an Asset of his Country
and its History.

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It is a universally acknowledged fact that some of the leaders of the Civil War have not been, even at this late day, accorded the meed of credit to which they are justly entitled for the services they rendered their country in the days of its great peril; and it is also true that there were other leaders whose services have either been ignored or belittled amid a blare of unfair criticism, of ridicule and puerile detraction, largely incited by sensational muck-rakers, the most despicable of the entire brood of literary

scavengers that infest the intellectual life of the American people, who neither love man nor fear God.

General Burnside is one of those who has suffered greatly in reputation as a soldier, both during his lifetime and since his death, from these sources, and by no means less through biographies and other publications emanating from the pens of military officers who served in the Civil War, either under or over him. Experience has proved beyond reasonable doubt, that narratives of battles or military campaigns of which military officers are the authors, and who figure in the stories, should be accepted, regarding criticisms of either their superior or associate officers, as authoritative, only after the most impartial and careful scrutiny, that serious injury may not be done to others through prejudice, personal grievances, jealousy or other evil passions.

It is with a sense of sincere pride, together with a profound personal respect and admiration, that the name of Major-General Ambrose Everett Burnside is referred to as one of those leaders whose military services have not received that degree of fair and

just recognition to which their value to his country entitles them.

His is a name—and contradiction is confidently challenged to the contrary—that stands for all that is best in American manhood. His nobly generous character was the embodiment of all that is superbly manful and chivalrous, and which survives, together with the memory of his military achievements,—a living rebuke to minds rendered incapable through superficial judgment, prejudice and traffick-
ing in sensationalism, of penetrating the mass of idle gossip, of derisive criticism, of irresponsible charges and malicious detraction, of probing for and bringing to the surface the truth as it actually exists.

The fighters of battles fought, the self-appointed critics, the perverters of history and the sensation-mongers, have been too preoccupied in their efforts to expose weak places in his military armor, or to spy out grounds, no matter how superficial, that might be made to belittle his services or subject his personality to derision or ridicule, to discover the high value of his military services in the Civil War as an asset of the country and its history.

It is not the purpose of the writer to exalt General Burnside as a genius in the art of war. He made no such claim for himself; neither do his friends for him. Neither shall I attempt to apologize for any mistakes or failures for which he may have been responsible. Mistakes and failures have been the lot, during all time, of the greatest military captains in the world's history, as it was of the most exalted of his compatriots in arms.

It was the irony of fate that Napoleon failed at Moscow, at Leipsic, and finally at Waterloo, where his star of destiny was forever extinguished; but these defeats did not diminish the splendors of his genius nor detract from his military greatness.

The assault on Marye's Heights failed; yet Lee made as great a failure when he hurled Pickett's fifteen thousand Virginians against the steel-girt slopes of Cemetery Ridge; and Grant committed no less an one when he gave the order that sent the Army of the Potomac into the jaws of hell at Cold Harbor. But now, no one thinks of detracting from or depreciating either the services, character or reputation of Generals Grant or Lee.

It is not intended, either, to shrink from defending the memory of General Burnside regarding mistakes or failures for which he assumed responsibility, not altogether his own, under stress of an intensely patriotic sense of duty, that moved him to self-sacrifice rather than imperil the cause of his country by adding to the then existing dissensions in the army through any attempt of his own to seek redress for wrongs from which he had suffered. There is the true ring of a great soul, as well as a pathos, in General Burnside's reply to the importunities of his closest friends in the army, who were familiar with his wrongs, to personally defend himself after he had been viciously arraigned regarding the Fredericksburg Campaign.

"Time and history," he declared, "will vindicate me; and if they fail to do so, it is better that I should remain under a cloud, than that a word should be added to the dissensions already too prevalent in the army."

So persistent have been and are now his detractors in their arraignments regarding both his military services and his personality, that a very con-

siderable number of the general public have become greatly prejudiced, having been insidiously led to believe that he was not only in a large measure incompetent as a military leader, but that his military career was a failure; and thus the valuable services he rendered his country during the period of its great peril are being ignored or belittled amid unreasonable criticisms and scandalous detractions.

Obviously the time has arrived when the countrymen of General Burnside who knew him best, and are familiar with the value of his services, can no longer keep silent.

For these reasons the writer is moved to take upon himself the task, as a work of love as well as of duty, of presenting the claims of General Burnside's military services for a fair and just recognition, although it is candidly confessed that there are many among the hosts of his surviving friends and admirers who are far better qualified for the work than himself, if they could be prevailed upon to assume it. The most that it is expected to accomplish by this poor endeavor is to blaze the way for others to follow, and clear up the perplexing tangle of truth and falsehood.

No attempt will be made to analyze the military campaigns or movements in which General Burnside took a subordinate part, or which were executed under his immediate direction during the Civil War; but only in a general way to refer to them and point out the value of his services, taking into account the entire field of his military career; the sole end and purpose being that the truth may be made to appear, so that the true value of General Burnside's military services during the period of the Civil War as an asset of his country and of its history may be fairly and justly estimated and shown.

The statement is made, without fear of challenge from fair-minded, truth-loving men, that General Burnside rendered inestimable military services in the field during the Civil War, manifesting on many occasions a versatility of initiative in both suggesting and framing plans for military campaigns, original, brilliant and practical in conception, some of which were later adopted and carried into execution either by himself, or by others of his compatriots in arms, to the honor and glory of the armies

of the Union, but for which due credit has not been awarded him.

On Monday, April 15, 1861, Ambrose Everett Burnside received in the New York office of the Illinois Central Railroad the following telegram from War Governor William Sprague:

"A regiment of Rhode Island troops will go to Washington this week. How soon can you come on and take command?"

He promptly answered, "At once."

Colonel Burnside reached Washington but a few days after Fort Sumter was fired on, in command of the First Regiment Rhode Island Detached Militia, a battalion of which reached Washington shortly before the main body, being the first fully uniformed, armed and equipped troops to report to the Commander-in-Chief, which was accomplished through the personal efforts of both Governor Sprague and himself.

He hastened, on reaching Washington, to call on General McDowell, advising delay in making the proposed advance on the forces of Secession, then concentrating in Virginia, urging that the Union

troops which were hurrying to Washington but partially uniformed, undisciplined and indifferently armed and equipped, were not in fit condition for the contemplated movement against the enemy. He was looked upon with suspicion of his loyalty by the politicians who were present. It was then the politicians' campaign, whose slogan was, "On to Richmond."

Had Burnside's advice, and that of others of like experience and military judgment, been heeded, the country would doubtless have escaped the defeat at Bull Run and the demoralization that followed, and possibly the war might have been sooner ended.

His conduct at Bull Run was conspicuously cool, gallant and brave, handling the troops under his command with a skill which attracted the favorable notice of the country, and commanded the confidence of President Lincoln and his official advisers, all of which resulted in his promotion on August 6, 1861, to the rank of Brigadier-General of Volunteers.

He was ordered to report to General McClellan, who had practically succeeded General Scott as Commanding General, and who placed him in charge

of the new troops as they arrived in Washington, with orders to attend to their drill and discipline, preparatory to their merger into the brigades and divisions then being organized in Washington under the name of the Army of the Potomac.

This duty was an interesting service, but soon became irksome to General Burnside, as his mind grappled with the problems in the larger field of military activities, stimulated, doubtless, by a desire to do something to dispel the gloomy forebodings that prevailed in the eastern section of the country, where only defeats had thus far met the efforts of our armies, and which were giving encouragement to copperheads and other unfriendly critics of the Government's endeavors to suppress what in those days was called treason and rebellion.

Early in October of 1861, while chatting with General McClellan, a turn in the conversation afforded General Burnside an opportunity to suggest a plan for raising a coast division to which he had been giving considerable thought.

After giving a somewhat detailed statement of his plan, General McClellan asked him to put it in

writing as soon as possible, which he did, presenting it the next day. McClellan indorsed it with his approval, and forwarded it at once to the Secretary of War, by whom it was speedily approved. The general details of the plan, to use the words of Burnside, were:

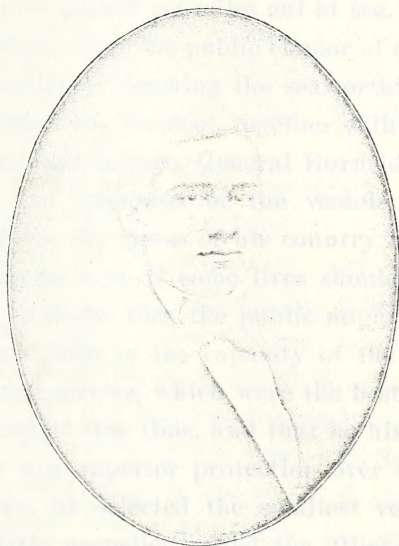
"To organize a division of from twelve to fifteen thousand men, and to fit out a fleet of light draft steamers, sailing vessels and barges, large enough to transport the division, its armament and supplies, so that it could be rapidly thrown from point to point on the coast with a view to establishing lodgments on the Southern coast, landing troops and penetrating into the interior, thereby threatening the lines of the enemy's transportation in the rear of the main army of the enemy then concentrating in Virginia, and holding possession of the inland waters on the Atlantic coast."

Upon the approval of his plan Burnside was ordered to proceed at once to New York and fit out a fleet for the expedition as planned. On the 23d of October, 1861, his headquarters were established at Annapolis, Maryland, for the concentration of the division and for its drill and discipline. It was very

difficult to secure the necessary vessels of suitable light draft for the expedition, the supply having been nearly exhausted by requisitions of the Government for other purposes, so that it was not until December 12 that General Burnside telegraphed General McClellan that a sufficient amount of transportation and armament had been secured for the expedition.

It was a nondescript aggregation of crafts improvised for this service, and had it not been for its martial mission it might have served as a spectacular burlesque at sea.

Forty-six transports were employed, eleven of which were steamers. There were also nine armed propellers to act as gunboats, and five North River barges armed as floating batteries, carrying altogether forty-seven guns, mostly of small calibre. Those formed the army division and were under the command of Commander Samuel F. Hazard. A naval squadron composed of twenty vessels, carrying fifty-five heavy guns, was commanded by Commodore Goldsborough. The land forces were divided into three brigades under the command of Brigadier-



DANIEL R. BALLOU

Taken about the time of the war

Generals Foster, Reno and Parke, personal friends of Burnside.

On the night of the 11th of January, 1862, the fleet set sail from Fortress Monroe under sealed orders, to be opened six miles out at sea.

Notwithstanding the public clamor of distrust and severe criticisms touching the seaworthiness of the vessels composing the fleet, together with predictions of disaster and failure, General Burnside, although knowing the weakness of the vessels, deemed it necessary for the cause of his country to prosecute the enterprise even if some lives should be lost by wrecks. In order that the public might be assured of his own faith in the capacity of the vessels for the required service, which were the best that could be procured at this time, and that he himself might not enjoy any superior protection over that of any of his men, he selected the smallest vessel of the fleet, a little propeller called the "Picket," for his headquarters,—a boat which would be less able to cope with a storm at sea than any of the other and larger crafts,—thus exhibiting that unselfish, self-sacrificing spirit that characterized his entire mili-

tary career. The weather was somewhat threatening as the fleet put to sea, yet not sufficiently so as to cause alarm; but on the 12th of January a terrific storm burst upon the devoted fleet, lashing the waters into a fury of raging billows that pounded and broke over the vessels, which vainly endeavored to breast their overwhelming blows as they staggered and reeled amid the frightful warring of the elements.

On board the little headquarters boat, "Picket," tossed about as a cockle-shell, now engulfed by the tempestuous sea, strained and quivering to the uttermost as it rose on the crests of the furious waves, was seen the stalwart and knightly form of General Burnside, grasping the rigging of the little propeller and peering anxiously through the mists and drenching spray, watching the vessels of his fleet struggling in the teeth of the frightful gale. He stood like a Viking on the deck of his little steamer, hailing each passing vessel, inquiring after the welfare of the men, and speaking words of encouragement and cheer.

Arriving off Hatteras, the vessels sought entrance

to Pamlico Sound, those of light draft working their way over the bar into the inlet or into the calmer waters beyond, while those that turned out to be of too great draft headed off shore or sought the lee of the cape for greater safety.

For two weeks the storm raged, imperiling the vessels that were drifting storm-tossed outside the bar, together with their precious freights of human life and of horses, munitions and supplies.

On the 25th of January the storm broke, and the vessels held so long outside the bar had found their way into the inlet, with the exception of three, which succumbed to the storm and went down, but without loss of human life.

On the 26th an attempt was made to bring the vessels remaining in the inlet into the sound, but very many of them were unable, by reason of their eight feet draft, to pass over the "swash," so-called, that separates the inlet from the sound, and upon which there was but six feet of water. A breach, therefore, had to be made for their passage, which consumed several days, so that it was not until February 4 that the entire fleet came to anchor in

the sound, and orders were given for the movement on Roanoke Island.

General Burnside had scarcely slept night or day during the fearful experiences of that two weeks of threatened disaster, devoting his undivided attention and energy to the management of the great fleet. When a signal of distress was sounded or displayed during the night or day, he was the first man off to render assistance, performing the duties of life-saver, of navigator, pilot and harbor-master, besides acting both as general and admiral, being loyally assisted by his subordinates and the officers of the navy. Happily, owing to his skilful management and untiring vigilance, but two lives were lost.

No attempt will be made to describe the movements of the army and naval forces which resulted in the brilliant victories of Roanoke Island of February 8, Newbern of March 14, and of Fort Macon of April 26, 1862, won under the immediate direction of General Burnside, personally present in the field.

The value of these victories was inestimable. The defeat of Big Bethel, the disaster at Bull Run, and the tragedy of Ball's Bluff, together with an absence

of military success in the eastern section of the country, had caused gloomy forebodings and discouragement among the friends of the Union, and on the other hand, had excited disloyal criticism among the copperhead element; but now confidence was restored, and there was great rejoicing and renewal of courage among the loyal element of the North. The story of the expedition, together with the results of the campaign, have been presented somewhat in detail because they afford a true insight into the high character of Burnside as a soldier and man, exhibiting, as he did, eminent ability as a strategist, conscientious, prudent and successful leadership, conspicuous courage under fire, together with a modest and unassuming demeanor in the midst of the plaudits of his countrymen.

In appreciation of the victories of Roanoke Island and Newbern, President Lincoln nominated him a Major-General of Volunteers, and the Senate promptly, on March 18, 1862, confirmed the appointment. Upon the receipt of the news at Washington of the victory at Newbern, Secretary Stanton, in a dispatch, conveyed, in behalf of the President, the

Department and the whole nation, a tender of thanks for distinguished services rendered by General Burnside and the officers and men under his command.

The General Assembly of Rhode Island voted General Burnside a sword, together with its thanks. The Legislatures of Massachusetts and Ohio, then in session, also passed congratulatory resolutions.

During the latter part of June, 1862, Burnside was summoned to a conference with General McClellan at Fortress Monroe, and promptly answered the call with his presence. Returning to Newbern, he held himself in readiness to respond to further orders. The retreat of McClellan to Harrison's Landing in July suspended, for the time being, further contemplated military operations in North Carolina, namely, in the neighborhood of Raleigh in case of McClellan's success on the Peninsula, a part of Burnside's original plan, with the purpose of cutting off Lee's retreat into the Gulf States, his chief source of supplies.

Burnside, early in July, after McClellan retreated to Harrison's Landing, was recalled from North

Carolina with two of his divisions, primarily to reinforce the Army of the Potomac. He embarked his divisions, which, on reaching Fortress Monroe, were there detained under special orders from Washington until about the 2d of August, when they were ordered to proceed to Acquia Creek, where they arrived on the 4th and 5th. General Burnside, on arriving with his command at Fortress Monroe, met President Lincoln, with whom he had a conference. In the meanwhile he visited Washington, where, at the conclusion of a long interview with President Lincoln, General Halleck and Secretary of War Stanton, the President offered him the command of the Army of the Potomac, which he courteously and peremptorily declined. In the meantime, after his command had reached Acquia Creek, it was reorganized as the Ninth Corps, with which, reinforced by General Isaac Stevens' division, he was ordered to proceed to the Rappahannock to cooperate with the Army of Virginia under General Pope, with headquarters at Fredericksburg. General McClellan, under orders, withdrew from the position occupied by him on August 20, and commenced

to embark his troops, a large detachment of which disembarked at Acquia Creek, to which point he was ordered to hasten, arriving there on the morning of the 24th in the expectation, as he says, of advancing to the relief of Burnside and General Pope, who were reported hard-pressed by the Confederates. Soon after he was ordered to proceed to Alexandria, arriving there on August 26, his army having been concentrated in that neighborhood. Here he was soon practically deposed, General Halleck having been appointed to succeed him in the chief command.

On taking command at Fredericksburg, Burnside was confronted by a question of rank,—being the superior of General Pope,—but in the same generous and loyal spirit he never failed during his military career to display, when occasion arose, he cheerfully and without question assumed the subordinate place. General Burnside furnished General Pope during the final days of his disastrous campaign in Virginia, his unqualified loyal support, which elicited his warmest expressions of gratitude and appreciation.

The timely arrival at Fredericksburg of the Ninth Corps, reinforced by Stevens' division, and the prompt assistance rendered by Burnside, doubtless prevented the turning of Pope's left flank, which, had the Confederates succeeded in doing, would most likely have resulted in cutting off his army from Washington.

The Confederate forces confronting Pope, reinforced by Lee's veterans, fresh from their successes on the Peninsula, were aggressively forcing the fighting, which resulted in his being thrown back upon the defenses of Washington. The enemy were at the same time pressing vigorously upon Burnside, when he was ordered to withdraw his troops from Fredericksburg and bring them to the Capital. He promptly burned all the bridges leading to the town, a machine-shop and the government buildings. Through cool judgment and prompt action, together with sleepless vigilance and untiring personal exertion, he brought, under cover of the night, his column, his artillery and wagon train over almost impassable roads safely to Acquia Creek. Here, under the protection of the gunboats and his own artillery,

the enemy hanging close on his rear, he embarked his troops and munitions, remaining behind and firing the government buildings, after which he started for Washington.

Arriving at the Capital, he found the high officials, as well as the inhabitants, in a perturbed state, from fear of the capture of the city or a possible invasion of the North.

The fateful days of the summer and fall of 1862 were quite the gloomiest of any period of the great war. The failure of the Peninsular Campaign and the defeat at the second Bull Run battle well-nigh overwhelmed the loyal hearts of the country with discouragement and apprehension, and now, on the closing days of the long summer period of failure and disaster, as the wailing of bereaved kindred ascended from the hearthstones of thousands of homes, rendered desolate by battle-slain fathers, sons and lovers, the specter of dreadful war rose up in their distracted visions, stalking in the peaceful valleys and within the gates of the great cities of the North-land.

There was good cause for fear, as Lee's ragged

and hungry veterans, their breasts swelling with martial ardor, incited by the recent successes of their arms, were hovering about the gates of the Capital, eager and impatient to be led to its assault, or, what was more their desire, to the fertile valleys of the Northland, where they might levy tribute on their overflowing granaries, their herds and flocks, and the storehouses of rich merchandise that abounded in the great cities, wherewith to feast their famished bodies and clothe their nakedness.

Facing these impending dangers, the President again turned to Burnside, and with the approval of his official advisers, tendered him the command of the armies concentrated in and about Washington, as the most available general officer to marshal the forces and lead them successfully against the invader.

The tender of this high command was most enticing, being one that would have turned the head of a vain, self-seeking nature. But however alluring the opportunity it afforded General Burnside to tempt fate for the winning of fame in a great military struggle, he again manifested the same self-abjura-

tion and exalted patriotism as on the occasion of the former tender of the command of the Army of the Potomac. He saw with a clear vision that General McClellan, with his popular hold upon the veterans of the Army of the Potomac, was the commander in this emergency best qualified to successfully bring order out of existing confusion, arouse the rank and file of the various military organizations to enthusiastic action under his leadership, for repelling the invading foe. Burnside hesitated not a moment in refusing the honor, and, at the same time, earnestly urged the President to reinstate McClellan in the command.

The situation was too grave and urgent for further delay, and the President summoned McClellan to take command of "all the troops for the defense of the Capital." General Lee, having meanwhile withdrawn his army from before Washington, was now marching into Maryland. McClellan promptly detailed sufficient garrisons for the occupation of the several forts around Washington, and quickly organized an army and started for the enemy, five days after the defeat of General Pope at Second

Bull Run. Burnside was placed in the advance in command of the right wing, formed of the First Corps under General Hooker, General Cox's Kanawha Division and the Ninth Corps under General Reno. On September 13 the advance guard of Burnside's column came in contact with the enemy, with whom there was skirmishing. Later in the day Burnside's advance guard entered Frederick, Maryland, just as Wade Hampton's cavalry, Lee's rear guard, were leaving at the other end of the street.

The Union troops were received with the most patriotic expressions of loyalty and delight. Burnside, arriving later in the evening, was welcomed with the wildest demonstration of joy, and McClellan, arriving the next morning, was accorded a reception no less ardent and enthusiastic.

On the morning of September 14 Burnside started from Middleton toward South Mountain, about three miles distant, to meet the enemy. Pleasanton, moving forward from Middleton at six o'clock, met with determined resistance from a large force of the enemy. The battle opened with an artillery duel between batteries at long range. The infantry coming

up soon after, opened fire, which the Confederates briskly returned, as they retreated slowly up the mountain side, being hard pressed by Cox's division, which finally gained the crest, where it halted to await the arrival of the Ninth Corps. Wilcox's division was the first to arrive, reporting to Cox, the senior officer, at about two o'clock. McClellan, Burnside and Reno came soon after Wilcox's division, to a knoll in the valley which had been Pleasanton's position, and from this point, a central one in the midst of curving hills, issued their orders. McClellan established his headquarters at this point, where he remained in apparently most friendly co-operation with Burnside, as commander of the right wing, until the close of the engagement.

The battle raged fiercely until the dusk of evening, when General Reno fell, greatly lamented by the entire army. During the night the Confederates withdrew and retreated down the mountain, leaving the battlefield in possession of Burnside's command. The troops engaged at the summit, bivouacked for the night on the battlefield where the severest fighting took place, resting on their arms.

General McClellan, in his dispatch, sent off that night to the President, characterized the result of the battle as "a brilliant victory."

During the morning hours of the 15th orders were given for an advance of the army on the roads leading to Sharpsburg. In consequence of unavoidable delays, Burnside's column did not get a clear way to move until past noon, doubtless in part caused by the change in his position to the left of the line.

In the late afternoon of the 16th McClellan came in contact with the enemy in the neighborhood of Antietam Creek.

General Lee, having taken advantage of the past two days, had intrenched himself in a strong position of his own choosing, on the westerly side of the creek, in front of Sharpsburg.

Late in the afternoon, through McClellan's disposition of his forces, Burnside found himself with a serious task confronting him, in command of only the Ninth Corps and the Kanawha Division under General Isaac B. Cox, and occupying the extreme left of the line, with his troops disposed along the easterly side of Antietam Creek.

Under the instructions given Burnside on the evening of the 16th, he was to hold his command in readiness to advance, when ordered on the next morning, and carry the bridge over Antietam Creek, since known as "Burnside Bridge," together with the heights beyond, and, having gained their crest, to press the attack on the Confederate right wing, capture Sharpsburg and cut off the retreat of the enemy. As this would be a perilous movement, as well as a difficult one to accomplish, he called together his commanding officers during that evening, and carefully instructed them in the detail necessary for its execution.

At ten o'clock the next morning Burnside received the order of McClellan to carry the bridge, as directed the night before. This order was at once carried into effect. General Cox, who had been standing by Burnside all the morning, watching the fight, started at once to attend to the details of which he had charge for carrying the order into effect, and without delay caused the troops to advance as directed. It was an appalling task to carry the bridge and heights beyond. The heights and crest bristled

with rifle-pits and stone walls, behind which were posted the enemy's artillery, infantry and sharpshooters, from which protection a destructive enfilading fire was directed against the Union columns in their struggle to carry the bridge and heights. For three mortal hours the gallant veterans of Burnside's command struggled back and forth amid a fierce and deadly tempest of shrapnel, of flying rifle bullets and exploding shells, in heroic assaults at the bridge, the fords of the Creek and the well-nigh impregnable heights beyond, and when at length they succeeded in carrying the bridge and gaining a foothold under the crest, the ground over which they fought their way was drenched and crimsoned with blood, shed as a full-measure offering, even to overflowing, to their country's cause.

Beneath the crest of the embattled heights the assaulting troops were compelled to halt and make necessary preparations for their further advance. It was now one o'clock, three hours having been consumed in gaining their position. McClellan, hearing of the halt, dispatched a succession of imperative orders, impatient in tone, for a forward move-

ment, which was then physically impossible. Sturgis's Division was so exhausted that reserves had to be ordered up and placed in its front. Some of the command had exhausted their ammunition. Hurry orders were sent out for troops to replace Sturgis's Division and for the ammunition train to cross the bridge. After most strenuous exertions, in which Burnside lent his personal assistance, the preparations were completed, and at three o'clock the troops again advanced, carrying the crest and driving the Confederates to the vicinity of Sharpsburg. McClellan says, in his "Own Story":

"The advance was then gallantly resumed, the enemy was driven back from the guns, the heights handsomely carried and a portion of the troops reached Sharpsburg."

It was now nearly dark and the enemy was then reinforced by the troops of A. P. Hill, who had just arrived from Harper's Ferry, which made a vigorous attack on Burnside's left flank, forcing his lines back to the lower line of the hills near the bridge. As his lines were driven back the situation became extremely critical. Burnside, realizing the danger

of being forced back across the bridge, dispatched an aide to McClellan with the message:

"I want troops and guns. If you do not send them I cannot hold my position for half an hour."

"Tell General Burnside," said McClellan, . . . "he must hold his ground till dark, at any cost. I will send him a battery; I cannot do more." As the aide was riding away he called him back. "Tell him also, that if he cannot hold his ground, then the bridge to the last man; always the bridge; if the bridge is lost, all will be lost."

The battle ceased as night cast its sable wings over the ghastly scenes of war's dreadful carnage, calmness succeeding the strain and excitement evoked by the roar of artillery, the crash of musketry, the battle cries and the clamor of the charge. And now the wearied and exhausted heroes of Burnside's command lay down upon the ground near the bridge which they had wrested from the enemy in a titanic struggle, to rest on their arms.

Late in the evening of the day of the battle General Burnside called on General McClellan at his headquarters, and in conversation concerning the

events of the day suggested the advisability of resuming the battle on the following morning, "offering to lead an advance against the enemy, provided McClellan would give him five thousand fresh troops to pass in advance of his Ninth Corps." General McClellan declined to take the responsibility of renewing the engagement, and accordingly General Lee, undisturbed by McClellan's veteran army, which had expectantly waited to be again led to the attack, leisurely transported across the Potomac his munitions and supplies, together with the booty captured at Harper's Ferry and in Maryland, and on the 19th of September quietly crossed the river with his troops into Virginia, passing by easy stages into the Shenandoah Valley, where his veterans sat down and enjoyed the fruits of their Maryland campaign, together with a recuperative rest from their strenuous service.

On October 13 General Burnside, under orders of General McClellan, strangely delayed, crossed the Potomac just below Harper's Ferry and marched

along the easterly base of the Blue Ridge Mountains, with the purpose of preventing Lee from escaping through any of the passes; but meanwhile the Confederate Army had slipped through Thoroughfare Gap, its right wing in camp at Culpepper Court House, with its left resting in the valley.

What happened on the night of November 7, 1862, is familiar history. It was a dramatic incident in a dismal setting. It was the appearance at the tent of General Burnside in a blinding snowstorm, of General Buckingham, bearing as the special confidential messenger of President Lincoln, an order relieving General McClellan from the command of the Army of the Potomac, with instructions to report at Trenton, New Jersey, for further orders, accompanied by an order placing General Burnside in command, to which he reluctantly yielded obedience, solely because it came as an order; and then the cold and cheerless night ride of Generals Buckingham and Burnside through the winter's blizzard to the headquarters of McClellan, twenty miles away, on

the delicate mission of notifying him that he was relieved, and of the succession of Burnside to the command.

This story is continued in the next paper (Series 7, No. 9) of these Publications.

Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society
of Rhode Island

WAR OF THE REBELLION
Personal Narratives

SEVENTH SERIES, No. 9

The Military Services of
Major-General Ambrose Everett Burnside
in the Civil War

PART II

By DANIEL R. BALLOU

[Late Second Lieutenant 12th Regt. R. I. Volunteer Infantry.]

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OF EVENTS IN THE

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BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE

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From the battles of South Mountain and Antietam which followed, date a succession of unfriendly attacks by General McClellan upon General Burnside's conduct in those engagements, and which were repeated with exaggerations after his succession to the command of the Army of the Potomac, and especially after the repulse at Fredericksburg, to his great prejudice; and which have continued to be recounted since his death, serving as a basis of other detractions which scandalize his memory and belittle his personality, all of which are primarily trace-

able to the resentful aspersions of General McClellan.

Human nature, in its highest types, has its weaknesses and its innate baseness. It is to these features that we have to look for the solution of many of the problems of life. General McClellan possessed his share of temperamental weaknesses. The right is therefore reserved to point out certain features of his moral and mental nature, which, to a large extent, seem to have influenced him to yield to jealousy and consequent resentment, and which throw light upon his animadversions regarding Burnside. It is inferred from a perusal of his "Own Story," in which was published, fourteen years after the close of his military career, his account of his services, that he was a man of strong religious convictions, and also profoundly impressed that through the providence of the Almighty he had been invested with the sword of a deliverer with which to overcome the enemies of his country and save it from ruin. Many of his private letters published in his "Own Story" abound in expressions of his faith in this mission.

As such, he was supersensitive to every suggestion of his superiors in authority that in the least seemed to question the soundness of his military judgment or the efficiency of his military plans, or their execution. He was also suspicious and resentful in his relations, perhaps justly so in some cases, with very many of the highest civil and military officials associated with the President, and which were so personal in character as to reflect upon the President himself. "Fools and foolish" occur with frequency in his "Own Story" in designating many of his compatriots in arms, including high public officials.

With a temperament such as McClellan's, could there have existed a greater cause of resentment than the offer twice made by the President to Burnside of the command of the Army of the Potomac, together with the final relieving of the former from its command, and the succession of the latter? From McClellan's standpoint, these were acts which divested him of the badge of military infallibility which he seemed to regard as his exclusive possession, serving to arouse his jealousy, and inspiring a

degree of resentment against Burnside, upon whom, all unsought by himself, had been thrust, in face of his protest, military leadership as McClellan's successor.

Are the charges made by McClellan regarding Burnside at South Mountain and Antietam true?

Surely, a reasonable and fair inspection of General Burnside's real character, together with the record of his military acts and doings in those historic engagements, overwhelmingly disprove the truth of the accusations which General McClellan brought against him.

It must be unreservedly confessed, that if the charges made by General McClellan regarding General Burnside's conduct at South Mountain and Antietam, as they appear in his private letters published in his "Own Story" and in its text, are true, Burnside was a despicable fake and craven, an arrogant coward and a colossal liar. It may seem superfluous to declare that he was neither, as it is, on the other hand, needless to declare that he was the soul of knightly honor, scorning subterfuge,—a true patriot, who served his country faithfully in whatever

post of duty or danger he was placed, to the extent of the ability with which a beneficent Creator had liberally endowed him. That he was a craven, a coward or a liar is unbelievable, as well as inconsistent with the firm, clear glance of his eye; the open, frank expression of both his countenance and his utterances, together with the nobility of his bearing. There was an entire absence of self-consciousness in his mental habit, and self-seeking was foreign to his nature. He was generous to a fault, never shirking responsibility for his acts, self-sacrificing when it would best serve his country, transparently truthful, sincere and friendly, gallant and brave in battle, and with a heart abounding with love for his fellow-men, and which beat with tenderness and sympathy in the presence of suffering and distress.

Nicolay and Hay, who were not altogether friendly in their criticism of the military ability of General Burnside, say, in their great work entitled "Abraham Lincoln, A History," referring to his services in the East Tennessee Campaign:

"Whatever may have been his faults and deficien-

cies as a general, a lack of resolution or a distaste for fighting could never be reckoned among them."

Senator Benjamin Harrison, afterwards President, in a eulogy pronounced in the United States Senate after his death, said of him:

"If unfriendly criticism shall deny him some of the qualities of the perfect leader, only base souls will fail to do reverence to the nobility of his character."

Wade Hampton, of South Carolina, the dashing cavalry leader of the Confederate Army, thus bore tribute to his soldierly qualities:

"In the dark days of the Civil War, when we stood in opposing ranks, I learned to respect him as a true, brave and gallant soldier. . . . It seems . . . not inappropriate that I, who, during the war, stood under the starry Cross, should pay a tribute, however feeble, to that gallant soldier, who, amid all trials and vicissitudes, in disaster as in success, bravely upheld the flag of the Union."

The first manifestation of unfriendly feeling by General McClellan towards Burnside was on the occasion of the sending of a dispatch to Washington

on the evening after the battle of South Mountain, notifying President Lincoln of the result of the engagement, but in which he made no mention of Burnside, although the battle was fought by the troops under his command. The animus of this omission is apparent, taken in the light of McClellan's probable personal pique, resulting from undoubted knowledge of the confidence reposed in Burnside by the authorities at Washington and the popular favor in which he was held by the people, as well, also, in the light of his subsequent animadversions regarding his conduct both at South Mountain and Antietam. McClellan, at page 583 of his "Own Story," in a statement made long after the engagement, declares in insinuating terms, referring to South Mountain:

"Burnside never came near the battle, as my position, yet it was his command in action."

General Cox, in command of the Kanawha Division, says in his story of the battle (see Volume 2, page 588, of Century Company's "War Book") :

"McClellan, Burnside and Reno had come soon after Wilcox's Division (which was about 2 to 2.30 p. m.), to the knoll in the valley, and from that

point, a central one in the midst of the curving hills, had issued their orders."

General McClellan, at page 577 of his "Own Story" further says:

"Generals Burnside and Reno arrived at the base of the mountain and Burnside directed the latter to move up the divisions of Generals Sturgis and Rodman to the crest held by Cox and Wilcox and to move upon the enemy's position with his whole force as soon as he was informed that General Hooker (who had just been directed to attack on the right) was well advanced up the mountain. General Reno then went to the front and assumed the direction of affairs. Shortly before this time I arrived at the point occupied by General Burnside and my headquarters were located there until the conclusion of the action."

General McClellan "arrived at the front at Middleton at about noon."

Burnside had been present at the front from six o'clock in the morning, directing the movements of his troops, and continued to do so, as McClellan states, until after his arrival at the knoll, overlooking the operations on the mountain. McClellan made no criticism at the time of Burnside's dispositions, that they were not properly made and were

not judicious and effective. The statements of both McClellan and Cox regarding Burnside's participation in the conduct of the battle would seem to dispose of the charges made long afterwards by McClellan, that Burnside was an inactive figure in the battle, or that he did not go as near to the battle as McClellan's position. These facts also throw light upon the motive of McClellan's omission to mention Burnside's name in his dispatch to the President informing him of the result of the engagement. In a private letter, under date of September 29, 1862, and published in his "Own Story," he writes: "I ought to treat Burnside very severely, and I probably will. . . . He is very slow, is not fit to command more than a regiment." The very extravagance of this statement would seem to imply a covert animosity.

His "Own Story," together with his private letters, disclose but one complaint of slowness at South Mountain. In his statement therein made long afterwards he says in substance, that Burnside upon his own request received orders early in the morning after the battle of South Mountain, to move his column over the turnpike towards Sharpsburg, that

he, McClellan, rode up to the battlefield about noon, and found his troops had not stirred from their bivouac.

General Cox, in his story of South Mountain published in Volume 2, at page 590, of the Century "War Book," says, in substance, regarding the delay in moving on the morning of the 15th:

"The delay was inevitable. The morning hours were consumed in burying the dead and caring for the wounded of both the Union and Confederate armies, and also in conveying the wounded from the field hospitals to the General Hospital at Middleton."

During the forenoon the troops were ordered to advance. The troops then started, General Cox's Division leading. On reaching that part of the field where the most severe fighting by Wilcox's Division took place, "it was halted for two or three hours," says the general, "to await the passing of a corps having the right of way." It was during this halt that McClellan rode onto that part of the field and saw, as he says, that "the troops had not stirred from their bivouac." This is the sole act of slow-

ness that McClellan points out on the part of Burnside at South Mountain. He points out another act of slowness during the battle of Antietam, charging that Burnside failed to make the attack at the bridge over Antietam Creek at the time ordered, and that but "for his delay the result of the battle would have been more decisive." As a matter of fact, the only delay was the halt for two hours under the crest, made after a three hours' fierce and bloody struggle to gain a foothold in order that necessary preparations might be made for the further advance. Nine months subsequent to the battle, it was alleged by McClellan that he ordered Burnside to cross the bridge at eight o'clock in the morning, and that he did not move until ten o'clock, and then only after repeated urgent commands. Burnside, in his official report, under date of September 30, 1862, two weeks after the battle, states the time he received the order to be ten o'clock. McClellan, in his preliminary report, under date of October 13, 1862, nearly a month after the battle, states the time also as ten o'clock, but in his official report, published in August, 1863, nearly a year after the battle, when recol-

lections of situations in the field had become indistinct, and for some reason not explained by him, he changed the hour from ten o'clock to eight as the time when he sent the order to Burnside to advance across the bridge.

General Cox having in his report given his judgment nine o'clock as the time when the order was given to Burnside, points out that it was "merely an impression of passing events, he having hastened at once to his duties without looking at his watch, while the cumulative evidence seems to prove conclusively that the time ten o'clock stated by Burnside and by McClellan himself in his original report, is correct."*

Colonel D. B. Sackett, who brought the order, gives the time when he got the order from McClellan "about nine o'clock,"† which fails to support his statement of eight o'clock as the time.

General Cox further points out that facts in his recollection strongly sustain the view that ten

* See Century "War book," Volume 2, note, page 649.

† Id., note, page 648.

o'clock was the hour when the order to attack was received.

It appears that after the preliminary orders of the day had been issued, General Cox went to the position occupied by Burnside, overlooking a large portion of the field, where he remained until the order of attack came.

As the morning wore away lines of the Union troops were seen advancing from the right, upon the other side of the Antietam, and engaging the enemy. The right center becoming threatened, Franklin's Corps, as it went on the field, was detained to support it, and to further assist the heavy guns of Benjamin's battery, which had opened an effective fire.

Cox says, "It seems to me very clear that about ten o'clock in the morning was the great crisis in the battle."*

It would seem that McClellan then determined to further help the right by a demonstration on the left.

At this time, therefore (ten A. M.), McClellan gave his order to Burnside to try and cross the stream,

* Id., page 646.

thus making a diversion to aid the hard-pressed right.

In the meanwhile, our lines having halted, Burnside and Cox were tortured with anxiety, watching to see whether our lines would advance or retreat, also noting the results of the long-range guns. Cox points out that,

“While this contest was going on one of McClellan’s staff rode up with an order to Burnside. Burnside turned to me saying, ‘We were ordered to make our attack.’ I left . . . at once to give personal supervision to the movement and did not return. . . . The manner in which we had waited, the free discussion of what was occurring under our eyes, the public receipt of the order by Burnside in the usual business form, forbid the supposition that it was a reiteration of a former order. It was immediately transmitted to me without delay or discussion further than to inform us that things were not going altogether well upon the right and it was hoped our attack would be of assistance.”*

McClellan manifests another lapse of memory, if not a purpose to mislead, in a statement contained

* Id., pages 647, 648, 649.

in his official report of August, 1863, in which he speaks of the task of carrying the bridge as little different from a parade or march across, which might have been done in half an hour, while in his original report he truly said it was "a difficult undertaking."

McClellan, insinuating cowardice on the part of Burnside, says in his "Own Story," that "he did not cross the bridge during the engagement." General Cox is authority for the fact that he did cross, and in his story of the battle published in the Century "War Book," regarding the changes and preparations for the further advance, after gaining a foothold under the crest, says:

"It was three o'clock before these changes and preparations could be made. Burnside had personally striven to hasten them, and had come across the bridge to the west bank to consult and hurry matters, and took his share of personal peril, for he came at a time when the ammunition wagons were delivering cartridges, and the road where they were, at the end of the bridge, was in the range of the enemy's constant and accurate fire."

This would seem in all reason to put to rest the sinister charge that Burnside did not cross the bridge.

General Burnside testified before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, regarding events during the evening of the 17th, that,

"Late in the evening after the battle I went to General McClellan's tent, and in course of conversation I expressed the opinion that the attack might be renewed the next morning at five o'clock, and told him that if I could have five thousand fresh troops to pass in advance of my line, I would be willing to commence the attack on the next morning."

McClellan denies the truth of Burnside's testimony regarding an offer to lead an advance, and points out in his "Own Story," in contradiction of it, that early on the morning of the 18th Burnside "sent to me for a fresh division to enable him to hold his own," that he told him "he would lend him Morell's Division for a few hours and that the division was sent."

McClellan then adds, "I cannot, from my long acquaintance with Burnside, believe that he would de-

liberately lie, but I think his weak mind was turned; that he was confused in action; and that subsequently he really did not know what had happened, and was talked by his staff into any belief they chose."

This statement is both so extravagant, in the light of Burnside's true character, and so passionate in its tone and spirit, as to convey to an impartial mind an absolute conviction of its falsity. If further proof is needed to disprove these charges, a copy of an affidavit of Brevet-Colonel of Volunteers James T. P. Bucklin, of Rhode Island, a Companion of the Massachusetts Commandery of the Loyal Legion, serving as captain in the Fourth Rhode Island Volunteers, Ninth Army Corps, in the battle of Antietam, is printed herewith as an appendix. He states therein that he called, on the evening after the battle, on General Rodman, his former colonel, and Lieutenant Robert Ives, an aide on his staff, at the field hospital where both lay mortally wounded, to inquire after their condition; that during his call General Burnside, who was making the rounds of the field hospitals looking after the wounded, dropped in to

see these wounded officers; that being well acquainted with Burnside, he stood by during his interview with General Rodman; that his, Burnside's, manner was calm and self-possessed, and his utterances were coherent and without any appearance of excitement or confusion of thought. He spoke a few comforting and encouraging words to the wounded officers; that General Rodman inquired, "How has the battle gone, General?" General Burnside, in his optimistic, confident way of speaking, replied in substance as follows: "It has gone well to-day, General; to-morrow we will have it out with them again." Colonel Bucklin says, "I then returned to my command, in the confident expectation that the battle would be renewed the next morning."

These things ought to satisfy all reasonably minded persons that Burnside was not in the condition of mind as represented by McClellan, and that he was then expecting a renewal of the battle.

In support of the statements regarding Burnside's alleged sending for a division on the next morning, the 18th, McClellan invoked letters from D. B. Sackett, Inspector-General, United States Army,

bearing date respectively February and March 9, 1876, fourteen years after the battle.

These letters are published in his "Own Story," in support of this statement of McClellan, but they fail to corroborate him in a number of essentially substantial facts.

General Sackett says he was present at headquarters when Burnside called on McClellan at his tent, and *fixes the time as late in the evening after the battle*, and admits a conversation between Burnside and McClellan about five thousand men, but states with vagueness and uncertainty that he *thinks* that the troops were wanted for the purpose indicated by McClellan, namely, to enable Burnside to hold his own near the bridge, while McClellan alleges that Burnside sent for a division *early on the morning of the next day*, the 18th. These admissions of General Sackett of a personal interview between McClellan and Burnside on the evening of the 17th and a request for five thousand men, and the failure of a definite recollection by General Sackett for what purpose they were to be used, although not entirely controlling, yet strongly tend to support Burnside's

testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, if any proof is necessary.

McClellan's statement that Morell's Division was sent to Burnside, and at his request, is true; but these facts do not support his allegation as to the time, namely, *on the morning of the 18th*, when he would have it understood it was sent at *Burnside's urgent request made early in the morning*, nor, further, that it was sent under the circumstances or for the specific purpose as related by McClellan in criticism of Burnside.

General I. B. Cox, who was in charge of affairs on the field, says (see Volume 2, pages 658-660, Century "War Book") :

"The Ninth Corps occupied its position on the heights west of Antietam without further molestation, except an irritating picket firing, till the Confederate Army retreated (night of 18th). But the position was one from which no shelter from the weather could be had; nor could any cooking be done; and they were short of rations. Late in the afternoon of Thursday (18th) Morell's Division of Porter's Corps was ordered to report to Burnside to relieve the picket line and some of the regiments in

the most exposed positions. One brigade was sent over the Antietam for this purpose, and a few of the Ninth Corps regiments were enabled to withdraw far enough to cook some rations, of which they had been in need for twenty-four hours."

It appears also in General Cox's account that Harland's Brigade of Rodman's Division, which had been badly used up, was taken to the east side of the stream for reorganization, being the only troops of the command moved over to that side. All the others remained on the west side until the retreat.

It is submitted that it fairly appears from all the facts and circumstances:

First, that Burnside called for troops and guns when, in the late afternoon of the 17th, he was being driven back by the reinforced enemy towards the bridge; receiving only a battery.

Second, that he called at McClellan's headquarters late in the evening after the battle and suggested an advance the next morning, offering to lead with five thousand fresh troops placed in advance of his own, which suggestion was not approved.

Third, that late in the afternoon of the 18th the

division of Morell was loaned him temporarily, which is substantially as McClellan puts it, and likewise for a temporary purpose as declared by General Cox. And also that the time, late in the afternoon, when Morell's Division was sent, would seem to reasonably imply a request for it made later than an early hour in the morning, namely, when, in addition to the fatigue induced by the strenuous experiences of the previous day, there appeared the exhausting effects of twenty-four hours of sleepless vigil and enforced fasting on the exposed heights across the bridge.

An impartial analysis of the conflicting statements of General McClellan regarding times, conversations and occurrences touching Burnside's acts and statements, taken in connection with McClellan's manifest irritation and illy suppressed anger, indicate, to say the least, that he was not disposed to be reasonable or just in his attitude towards Burnside, whom he makes quite the sole target, in his "Own Story," of embittered criticism.

The criticisms directed against both General Burnside's character and his military career, to which at-

tention has been called, were obviously inspired by jealousy, which, it seems reasonably certain, has been the source, very largely, of all the extravagant imputations of military incapacity, slanders, sneers and belittlements with which many writers, posing as historians, and idly gossiping tongues, have in the past, and are still continuing to regale the public to the scandal of as stainless a character, as unselfish a patriot, and as gallant, brave and resolute a soldier as ever drew sword in battle.

Passing now to the consideration of the repulse at Fredericksburg: no attempt will be made to discuss the details of the campaign, but simply to present a brief outline of General Burnside's plan of battle and the disposition and movements of the grand divisions composing the Army of the Potomac previous to and during the engagement, and stating the reasons why the actual responsibility for the disaster rested, in the light of all the facts, not with General Burnside, but with those of his subordinate commanders intrusted with the execution of his plan of battle who failed to respond in harmony of spirit or with martial zeal and enterprise in giving it their loyal support.

Neither will there be any attempt to evade the fact that General Burnside was not blameless, having failed as military commander invested with supreme authority to enforce obedience from reluctant or distrustful subordinates to his absolute and compelling will. As the storm of protest and censure swept over the country after the battle of Fredericksburg, assailing the Government for its failure to seasonably provide pontoons for crossing the Rappahannock and for undue haste in urging an advance against the enemy, Burnside saw as in a vision the perilous straits into which the country's cause was speeding, and with a moral courage that attested the sincerity of his patriotism and the greatness of his soul, stepped manfully into the breach, declaring, "For the failure of the attack I am responsible"; thus not only stemming the threatening tide of adverse public clamor and unrest that was menacing the cause of the Union, but also performing an act of self-sacrifice rarely, if ever, witnessed, save in one possessing a thoroughly unselfish nature.

The Government was thus relieved in an exceedingly critical situation of affairs which threatened

the most calamitous crisis of the war. Public confidence had been for some time undergoing a severe strain by reason of military failures and the nation's credit having become impaired to such an extent that the Government was fast approaching the limit of its ability to provide resources for the prosecution of the war. The people were profoundly touched by General Burnside's straightforward frankness and his splendid magnanimity, according him the fullest measure of their confidence, and he, in turn, confidently trusting that when all the conditions and circumstances involved in the disaster should be fully known he would receive vindication at the hands of his countrymen. The full force and extent of the disaffection that existed among some of his leading generals, which unquestionably led to the disaster at Fredericksburg, did not disclose itself at once to the unsuspecting and generous nature of General Burnside, causing him to be slow in passing judgment upon the offending ones.

He did not become fully conscious of it until later, after the excitement and confusion incident to the repulse had become allayed, and his plan to again

cross the river and renew the attack on Lee's army became known; when the truth of its existence was revealed in the unfriendly spirit and contumacious bearing of a number of his subordinate officers. The people will never know how near the danger line the country's cause was brought in those evil days through the jealousies, the want of harmony, the unholy ambitions and unpatriotic dissensions that pervaded the Army of the Potomac, the spirit of which finally penetrated, to an extent, the rank and file. It is better for both reputations and the country that it should never be fully known. Granted that all that has been said in criticism or disparagement of both General Burnside's personal and military character and services is true, it furnishes no ground of excuse for the insubordination or for the failure of any of his officers at Fredericksburg in co-operating with him to the fullest extent in carrying out his plan of battle, or in permitting distrust or want of harmony to interfere with their fullest and most earnest endeavors to make it a success. On the contrary, it should have excited them to so much the greater exertion for the accomplishment of success.

Any other action would not have been in accordance with the high standards of military ethics, which should ever obtain in a calling of so chivalrous and portentous a nature as the profession of arms.

There are three reasons why responsibility for the failure of the Fredericksburg campaign should not be charged primarily to General Burnside; while, but for those reasons, it is not extravagant to predict that at least a more favorable outcome of the battle, if not a victory, would have resulted, instead of defeat:

First, the unexpected and inexcusable delay in forwarding the pontoons for crossing the Rappahannock until the enemy was fully intrenched on the heights.

Second, the spirit of distrust and inharmony which had been craftily incited by innuendo and artful animadversions against the commanding general by hostile officers, largely inspired (of which there is undoubted evidence) by the unfriendly criticisms of General McClellan, whose confessedly great popularity among very many of the officers and men of the Army of the Potomac who were political sympa-

thizers and who resented his removal from command, had caused full credit to be given to his statements concerning Burnside at South Mountain and Antietam, to the serious injury of the discipline of the army and the impairment of its effectiveness; which matters and things throw light upon the failure of some of the general officers to advance their lines against the enemy on the specious pretense, reached by hair-splitting constructions, that General Burnside's orders were not sufficiently definite in terms.

It would be unjust to the memories of brave men not to acknowledge, in this connection, that a great majority of the officers of the Army of the Potomac fought in that ensanguined struggle loyally, valiantly and gallantly, doing all that human strength, courage and skill could do to win success, while the men behind the guns never fought on any battlefield with greater bravery and determination wherever they were efficiently led.

Third, the pernicious presence of partisan politics pervading the army, which seriously impaired its capacity and strength as a fighting unit. Confederate General Longstreet, in command of Lee's right,

pointed out, subsequent to the close of the war, that if Burnside had crossed at the mouth of Deep Run with a force equal to that which he had in front of Marye's Heights and made a determined attack on Lee's right, led by such sturdy fighters as Sumner and Hooker, he would have given Lee serious trouble.*

It appearing, as pointed out in the following pages, that General Burnside had only 100,000 effective men, of which Franklin had 60,000,† the following reply of Confederate General Cobb, in command at the Sunken road, to General Lee, who had expressed a fear, on witnessing the vigorous rally of the Union forces for a third charge, that it might prove successful: "*Look to your right, General; you are in some danger there, but not on my line,*"‡ seems to indicate a knowledge of both the strength of Franklin's forces and the possibilities of a determined and persistent assault at that point.

* See Vol. III, Century "War Book," page 85.

† See Hay and Nicolay, Vol. VI, note, page 210.

‡ Vol. III, The Century Company's "War Book," page 85.

In view of the foregoing, unprejudiced minds may well hold—and there are hundreds of surviving witnesses who participated in that disastrous struggle in front of Marye's Heights, and who listened in vain all day long for the sound of Franklin's guns, as they as vainly waited for the coming of Hooker's force, who concur in—the opinion that Burnside's real fault on that fatal day was his failure to cashier on the field officers who, in the presence of a manifestly impending crisis, were hesitating to advance their columns against the enemy, either by reason of insubordination, or from distrust, want of confidence or disapproval of the plan of campaign.

Burnside's plan of battle contemplated and provided for the main assault on Lee's right; but this nearly if not all his critics ignore, leaving it to be inferred that only vague, indefinite and indecisive instructions were given commanders, the main feature of which was a frontal attack upon Marye's Heights. Nothing is further from the truth. A plan of battle was communicated by General Burnside to his commanding officers pending the engagement, and was reasonably explicit to meet the shifting scenes of the action, and not an illy considered, haphazard affair.

General Sumner with the right grand division was to cross the river and gain a foothold in the upper or central part of the town, making a feint only on Marye's Heights. Franklin with the left grand division was to make the main assault a mile or two below, turn Lee's right and take his main position in flank. To support Franklin in the movement, two divisions of the Third Corps of Hooker's center grand division were sent him, thus giving him 60,000 effective men, which would seem to indicate to the lay mind that he was to make the main attack.

It appears, according to reliable sources of information, that the aggregate present of Burnside's army on the day of the battle was 185,386 men. The actual number of effectives present and equipped for duty in the fight was not far from 75,000 with Lee, and 100,000 with Burnside.*

These figures being correct, Franklin had three fifths of the army, and the remaining two fifths were divided between Sumner and Hooker. Franklin had

* See Vol. VI, Nicolay and Hay's "Abraham Lincoln," note, page 210.

assigned to him 40,000 men, together with two divisions of Hooker, numbering 20,000, making 60,000 men all told against Jackson's 30,000. Approximately, these figures indicate the possibilities suggested by General Longstreet.

Hooker with his remaining grand division was to move up on to the north bank, near the middle pontoon bridge, ready to cross, or go to the support of either the right or the left.

Hooker held back his troops, sending them in only in small detachments, instead of putting them in in force whenever, to his supposedly watchful eyes, the developments, accidents or exigencies incident to a battle presented any opportunity to render assistance, either by going to the aid of General Franklin if occasion required, or of General Sumner in case of an assault on Marye's Heights, or by uniting with him in any possible opportunity to turn the enemy's left. It is obvious that unless Franklin advanced vigorously in force against the enemy's right flank and Hooker supported him in force, Sumner had no chance to carry Marye's Heights, or to make, with hope of success, an attack on the enemy's left. There

was no call from Franklin for assistance, nor any cause for it. He sent in only one division and part of another, and but one at a time, to attack Lee's right. They advanced vigorously and gallantly drove the enemy before them, but, being unsupported, they were driven back, and were thereupon withdrawn. It was at this juncture, eleven o'clock A. M., that General Burnside, hopeless of Franklin's co-operation, ordered the assault on Marye's Heights.

Burnside's plan of battle and his disposition of troops under it, indicate that the battle was not fought as he had planned and directed.

His plan was raked as with a fine tooth comb, and its meaning distorted, rendering it inoperative for effecting its purpose.

The battle ought not to have been a disaster; and such would doubtless not have been the case had there been reciprocal harmony among his subordinates, and an absence of personal ambitions, jealousies and distrust. Let it not be forgotten that the physical difficulties that confronted the Army of the Potomac at Fredericksburg had their counterpart, in all essential features, at Missionary Ridge in No-

vember following, where was won one of the most brilliant victories of the Civil War.

There were no bickerings, no unholy ambitions, no lack of loyalty to their commander among the officers of General Thomas's army. The utmost harmony prevailed, officers and men vying with each other in a unity of purpose and a patriotic spirit of rivalry that rendered them invincible.

That the repulse at Fredericksburg excited a very keen sense of disappointment, accompanied with temporary confusion and depression, as well as outspoken criticism among the men, is not denied. On the contrary, it is as strongly asserted that the Army of the Potomac, amid the trying experiences of this disaster, as well as of those of the many other harrowing vicissitudes which diversify its splendid history, was never bereft of ready initiative, of aggressive courage, martial enthusiasm or self-confidence.

That it was hopelessly demoralized or wrapped in a cloud of gloom and dejection, existed principally in the prejudiced imaginations of disaffected subordinates.

The promptness and willing spirit with which the

men responded to General Burnside's call for the final advance against the enemy, known as the "mud march," together with the cheerful spirit in which they worked in extricating the artillery and transportation teams from the mud, and the patience and good-nature with which they bore the discomforts of the storm, go far to disprove the claim of hopeless demoralization and gloomy dejection. "The march was made in high good-humor, the soldiers laughing and joking at their ill-luck, with the comic brightness characteristic of difficult circumstances."*

Conditions in camp at Falmouth, in consequence of the open season and frequent rains, were very trying and serious. The clayey soil was kept in a constantly saturated state, with mud everywhere, making the imperfect shelters improvised by the men with the aid of the little shelter tents provided by the Government, but little better than habitations of swine. Much unrest, sickness and suffering resulted from the discomforts and exposures incident to these unhappy conditions, which were the chief

* Nicolay and Hay's "Abraham Lincoln," Vol. VI, page 210.

causes of the unrest, depression and discouragement among officers and men, and which were the chief causes of the increase in resignations and desertions. General Burnside, undismayed by his defeat at Fredericksburg or by the defection of his subordinates, and with a courage and resolution that faltered at no obstacles or discouragements, promptly, while his army rested for a few days, set about planning another advance against the enemy.

On the day following Christmas he ordered three days' rations to be prepared and each staff department to be ready with twelve days' supplies. His plan was to cross the river six or seven miles below Fredericksburg and attack the enemy simultaneously with a cavalry raid through Virginia in the rear of Lee, but communicating his plan only to his staff.

Just as the army was about to move, he received a telegram from the President saying,

"I have good reason for saying you must not make a general movement without letting me know."

Burnside rightly suspected treachery. It turned out that Brigadier-Generals John Newton and John

Cochrane, on the pretense of a personal visit to Washington, obtained a leave of absence, where, on the evening of December 29th, they sought an interview with President Lincoln. Gaining his ear, they informed him of the contemplated movement of Burnside, saying that the army was in such a state of demoralization and distrust that such a movement would only result in great disaster. These representations made a profound impression upon the President.

The furtive manner in which these officers reached the ear of the President evinces on their part the absence of a high standard of military ethics, bearing on its face the earmarks of a betrayal of confidence, together with an absence of soldierly discipline.

General Burnside went at once to Washington, necessarily much disturbed by the turn of affairs, to ask for an explanation of the restraining dispatch. The President told him frankly what he had heard, withholding the names of his informants. After a troubled interview with the President, on the morning of New Year's Day he returned to his camp with-

out any definite settlement of the interrupted campaign, rendered doubly perplexing by loss of time and accompanying favorable weather.

It is hard to conceive of a more distracting situation than the one in which Burnside was placed. The same day President Lincoln's dispatch was received, General Halleck telegraphed him that, for the success of Generals Dix and Foster it would be necessary to "occupy and press the enemy." On the same day General Meigs, Quartermaster-General of the army, one of the most sagacious and wise officers in the service, and especially qualified, as its purveyor and chief of transportation, to judge of the situation and the dangers threatening the army and the country, had, in a confidential letter which he wrote to Burnside on December 30, 1862, (found among his papers after his death,) expressed the opinion that, in consequence of the state of the public mind and the financial stress of the Government, (it being already unable to pay the expenses for supplies and transportation already incurred, and without funds for present needs,) if a victory was not won at an early day on the Rappahannock the Army of the Po-

tomac could not be kept together; at the same time urging Burnside to hasten a movement of his army with that purpose.

General Burnside felt that he ought to advance; but on the one hand, he was restrained by the President and without the support of his grand division commanders, Generals Hooker and Franklin, while on the other hand, he was advised by General Halleck and urged by General Meigs to advance.

It was a significant illustration of the necessity of one military head in command, invested with supreme power.

The attitude of his hostile subordinates, whose seditious onslaughts regarding his management of the battle is best illustrated by the intemperate and disloyal utterances of General Hooker, declaring: The commanding general was incompetent; his movements were absurd; the President and Government at Washington were imbeciles; nothing would go right till they had a dictator, and the sooner the better.

These contumacious declarations were but the reflection of the utterances of other subordinate offi-

cers, who were less indiscreet, but more crafty. The wonder is that the conduct of these officers did not cause greater demoralization, and, as a consequence, a more serious depletion of the army by both resignations of officers and desertions than was the case.

Among the grand division commanders, the noble old patriot and soldier, General Sumner, stood immovably loyal to his chief, vouchsafing, when questioned by the Committee on the Conduct of the War concerning the conditions in the army, to make only this laconic reply, which should have served as a stinging rebuke to intemperate tongues: "There is too much croaking in the army." On the 5th of January, 1863, General Burnside, doubtless largely influenced by the contents of General Meigs' letter, pointing out the financial stress of the country and its menace to the army, together with the crying necessity of a victory as a means to restore public confidence, felt impelled to make another movement, and accordingly wrote, asking the Government to authorize an advance, and also inclosing his resignation, which, he said, "can be accepted if his course was not in accordance with the views of the admin-

istration," adding, "My resignation is not sent in a spirit of insubordination, but simply to relieve you from any embarrassment in changing commanders where a lack of confidence may have rendered it necessary." General Halleck replied, assenting only in general terms, saying: "It will not do to keep your large army inactive. As you yourself admit, it devolves on you to decide upon the time, place and character of the crossing."

The President, on the 8th of January, indorsed this letter of General Halleck, as follows: "I approve this letter. I deplore the want of concurrence with you of your general officers, but I do not see the remedy. Be cautious, and do not understand that the Government or the country is driving you. I do not yet see how I could profit by changing the command of the Army of the Potomac, and if I did, I should not wish to do it by accepting your commission."

Making known to his officers his purpose to undertake another movement, he was met by vehement protests and prophecies of failure. But, say his critics, "he went on obstinately and sullenly, giving

out orders for preparations for an advance," and this just as though as commander-in-chief he was not invested with authority to act on *his own* personal judgment if he so willed. In the light of the startling reasons for an advance furnished him as a warning by General Meigs, together with the qualified assent and advice contained in General Halleck's letter and its approval by the President, who must have been cognizant of conditions existing in the army, what other course could he consistently have pursued under all the circumstances, unless to advance against the enemy, being its responsible military head? Objections and non-concurrence of subordinates do not negative the final judgment of a military commander whose authority is supreme in the field. Such judgment must be acquiesced in, whether good or ill, or military discipline ends.

On the 20th of January, making a feint of crossing the river below Fredericksburg, he moved up the Rappahannock, intending to cross at the upper fords and attack Lee's left. The weather was pleasant and the roads were in favorable condition, but during the night a furious rainstorm set in and by

daylight the roads were impassable for the artillery and transportation wagons. General Burnside, after exhausting every means in his power to advance, had finally to yield to the inevitable and bring his army back to camp through a sea of mud, with the loss of scores of horses and mules which dropped dead in harness in attempts to drag artillery and wagons out of the mud. Human determination, resolution, skill and energy were alike powerless to overcome this relentless, overwhelming counter-charge of the elements, and yet he has been ruthlessly condemned, belittled and ridiculed by his contumacious officers and self-appointed critics for the failure of a military movement induced by an adverse and unforeseen action of the laws of nature. From their viewpoint they have held, with a color of blasphemy, that the storm which defeated the movement was the act of God in confirmation of their prophecies of failure; while from another and more tenable viewpoint, this common incident of a rainstorm would seem to have been seized upon as a favorable fortuity for raising a hue and cry by means of which to shield themselves from public disapproval.

General Burnside's patience, under the long continued insubordinate conduct of many of his officers, was now exhausted, and on January 23, 1863, after the return of his army to camp, he decided to put the situation up to the Government for its action. He accordingly prepared an order dismissing General Hooker for "unjust and unnecessary criticisms of the actions of his superior officers," as a man "unfit to hold an important commission during a crisis like the present, when so much patience, confidence, consideration and patriotism are due from every soldier in the field"; dismissing General W. F. H. Brooks for complaining of the policy of the Government and for using language tending to demoralize his command; Generals Newton and Cochrane for their furtive visit to the President; the fourth paragraph of the order relieved from duty Generals Franklin, W. F. Smith, Samuel D. Sturgis, Edward Ferrero, John Cochrane and Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Taylor.

Armed with this order and with his own letter of resignation, he asked for an audience with the President, and on the following day placed in his hands

the alternative of accepting the one or the other. The President saw, what was obvious, that the existing insubordinate conditions in the Army of the Potomac had been allowed to drift too long and too far afield to be corrected by a dismissal of these officers. It was too late for General Burnside to clear himself from the blame which attached to him for his failure to deal summarily on the field with general officers who, from distrust, disapproval of his plan of battle, or through prejudice, failed to fully co-operate with him during the Fredericksburg battle. His great soul had been too generous and forgiving to impose swift sentence on offenders, for fear of doing injustice. But General Burnside's fault furnished no excuse for those officers, but for whose conduct, as pointed out, the battle would have been a success.

The President held the matter for consideration until the following day, when he informed General Burnside of his unwillingness to permit the dismissal of the disaffected generals. He accepted the alternative and relieved General Burnside from the command of the Army of the Potomac, conferring

the command on General Joseph Hooker. Mr. Lincoln was not unaware of General Hooker's inexcusable attitude towards Burnside and himself. But, as in many other instances where President Lincoln had been the object of abuse, he permitted no personal reasons to interfere with what appealed to him as best for the country. Notably was his patience in keeping McClellan in service in the face of his partisan and oftentimes abusive attacks upon himself until patience with his shortcomings had ceased to be a virtue. His appointment of Mr. Stanton to be Secretary of War, notwithstanding his high-handed and abusive language, spoken in so open a manner that Mr. Lincoln must have known it, is another case in point. So in the advancement of Hooker, he felt that he was the best qualified of any of the generals to take the command of the Army of the Potomac and give the country a victory. Burnside declared his willingness to accept that as the best solution of the problem; saying that no one would be happier than he if General Hooker could lead the army to victory. He then again tendered his resignation, which the President refused to ac-

cept, but gave him leave of absence for thirty days, adding quaintly that he had "other fish for him to fry." Burnside took leave of the army in a manly and chivalrous order, commending the "brave and skillful general to its cordial support."

In the meantime he visited his home in Providence, accompanied by his wife. His journey was one continuous ovation, the people assembling in great crowds at the railroad stations, hailing him with earnest expressions of confidence and respect inspired by his transparent honesty, sincerity and unselfish patriotism. It was his expressed wish, which was communicated to his friends at home, that he might be received without any public demonstrations. But his fellow-citizens would not consent, and on his arrival in Providence he was met at the railroad station by an immense throng of the inhabitants, who extended a welcome so spontaneous and enthusiastic as to unmistakably attest the unqualified confidence, esteem and affection in which he was held by his fellow-citizens, who knew him best.

The General Assembly, then in session, passed a complimentary resolution inviting him to visit the

Senate and House of Representatives, which he accepted, and on presenting himself was received without formalities, the members crowding about him, vying with one another in making it manifest by the warmth of their greetings that he was no less Rhode Island's honored soldier hero than when he returned to his adopted State crowned with laurels of victory won at Roanoke and Newbern. He remained at home but four days, returning to Washington hoping to be again assigned to the command of his beloved Ninth Corps. President Lincoln summoned him to several conferences, finally appointing him to the command of the Department of the Ohio with headquarters at Cincinnati, and at his request, two divisions of the Ninth Corps were ordered to accompany him.

The confidence of President Lincoln in General Burnside, notwithstanding the fierce storm of scandalous attacks made upon his character and reputation as a soldier and man, together with the relentless charges of incapacity with which he was assailed, remained steadfastly unshaken. The President sagaciously discerned the underlying pernicious

presence of the sinister motives and conditions that pervaded the Army of the Potomac under General Burnside, together with the disastrous part they played in its repulse at Fredericksburg. That this view was held by the President is clear from his written utterances, kindly in language of rebuke and fatherly in advice, as they appear in his celebrated letter to General Hooker after his appointment to succeed Burnside. Angered by the contents of the letter, yet General Hooker gave utterance to the manly words which confessedly do him honor, "He talks to me like a father."

The letter is under date of January 25, 1863. President Lincoln writes:

"You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good, rather than harm; but I think that during General Burnside's command of the Army of the Potomac you have taken counsel of your ambition and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable officer. . . . I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticising their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn

upon you," adding, in closing, assurances of his support and assistance.

These are words of deliberate judgment. Abraham Lincoln never expressed himself hastily in written communications affecting the honor, reputation, or integrity of his fellow-men.

It is noteworthy that retribution followed swiftly upon General Hooker's niggardly support at Fredericksburg, his high-handed abuse of both President Lincoln and Burnside, together with his offensive swaggering, in his defeat at Chancellorsville, which has come to be regarded as a lamentable failure.

The President's confidence in Burnside's trustworthiness and military ability was further emphasized by assigning him to the command of the Department of the Ohio, which involved extremely perplexing duties, together with very responsible and difficult services, among which were those of closing the avenues of illicit transportation of medical stores and other supplies across the Union lines for the aid and comfort of the enemy, together with the suppression of the increasing disloyalty in the West; also in holding Kentucky in the Union against the active

upon you, adding in closing, assurance of his
port and assistance.

These are words of deliberate judgment. It
happened Lincoln never expressed himself freely in a
less guarded manner, affecting the honor, reputation
or interests of his fellow-men.

It is noteworthy that throughout his life
upon general Lincoln's slightly superior to
establishing an equal footing with both Lincoln
Lincoln and his friends, together with his own
swaying in the debate as Lincoln's own
has come to be regarded as a landmark in the
history of the nation.

The President's position in Lincoln's
world, and nothing ability was perhaps
sized of weighing him in the command of the
President of the Union, who Lincoln's
first of his first, together with his own
historical services among which were those of
the armies of the Union, together with his
and other services which were those of
and content of the nation, together with his
tion of the President's ability in the
in Lincoln's history in the Union.

endeavors of the Confederate emissaries; and that still more important and difficult military enterprise which had long been a cherished purpose and sympathetic desire of President Lincoln, namely, the relief of East Tennessee, the home of loyal men and women whose magnificent patriotism could not be won over by the lures of treason, or be quenched by fire or the hangman's rope.

The brilliant campaign of General Burnside in East Tennessee, which relieved a long oppressed and suffering people from the persecutions of the rebellion, and which likewise served as an aid to the winning of the great victory of Chattanooga, fully justified the confidence of President Lincoln in his military ability.

General Franklin did not escape the consequences of his conduct at Fredericksburg, for which he was severely criticised by the Committee of Congress on the Conduct of the War, and was afterwards assigned to an unimportant command in the South which afforded but small opportunity for the display of his military talent, which he undoubtedly possessed.

General Hooker, after he was relieved from command of the Army of the Potomac, was assigned to the Army of the Cumberland, where he did valuable service, forever linking his name with the picturesque battle above the clouds on Lookout Mountain.

General Sumner was assigned to the West, but never assumed his command. He died in Syracuse, New York, on the following 21st of March, "universally respected and beloved for his noble qualities, his valor and his patriotism." Says the historian:

"He was the finest type the army possessed of the old-fashioned soldier; the quick eye, the strong arm, the unquestioning spirit of loyal obedience; the simple heart that knew not a sense of fear or of hesitation; that beat only for his friends, his flag and his God."

No act of insubordination could be laid at his door, nor did any breath of censure, of disapproval or distrust of his superior officer ever fall from his lips, a protecting fence against all intemperate speech.

APPENDIX.

AFFIDAVIT OF BREVET-COLONEL JAMES T. P. BUCKLIN.

(See page 21.)

I, James T. P. Bucklin, of the City and County of Providence, Brevet-Colonel of U. S. Volunteers, and a companion of the Massachusetts Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, make affidavit and say: That I served as a Captain in the Fourth Regiment, Rhode Island Volunteer Infantry, Ninth Army Corps, at the Battle of Antietam, on Sept. 17, 1862; that on the evening after the battle I called at the field hospital, where General Rodman, former Colonel of my regiment, and Robert Ives, Lieut., and Aide-de-Camp on the General's staff, were taken after being wounded, to inquire after their condition; that during my call, General Burnside, who was making the rounds of the hospitals looking after the wounded, dropped in to see these officers, who had been mor-

tally wounded ; that being well acquainted with General Burnside, I stood by during the interview with General Rodman ; that General Burnside's manner was cool, calm and self-possessed, and his utterances were entirely coherent, and without any appearance of excitement or confusion of thought ; that General Burnside spoke a few comforting and encouraging words to the wounded officers ; that General Rodman, in the course of the brief conversation, inquired, " How has the battle gone, General ? " General Burnside, in his optimistic, confident manner of speaking, replied in substance as follows : " It has gone well to-day, General ; to-morrow we will have it out with them again. " I then returned to my command, in the confident expectation that the battle would be renewed the next morning.

While I cannot vouch for the exact words that were spoken during the interview between these officers, yet the substance of the conversation as I have stated it, made a deep impression on my mind, which I have retained all these, more than fifty, years, as I have other incidents of that great battle which came under my observation.

JAMES T. P. BUCKLIN.

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND, }
PROVIDENCE SC. }

Subscribed and sworn to at the City of Providence,
in the County of Providence, on this 23d day of June,
A. D. 1914,

Before me,

CLIFFORD S. TOWER,

Notary Public.

Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society

of Rhode Island

Personal Narratives

SEVENTH SERIES, No. 10

RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE
Second Rhode Island Volunteers

SEVENTH SERIES, No. 10
AT THE

Siege of Petersburg, Virginia

By ELISHA H. RHODES

[Colonel Second Rhode Island Volunteer Infantry]

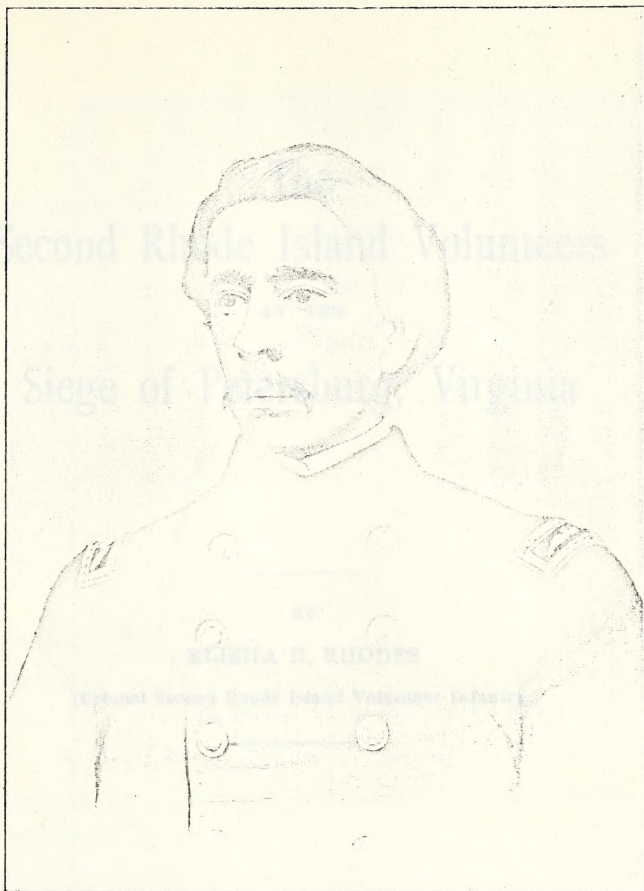
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E. H. Rhodes



Joshua H. Rhodes

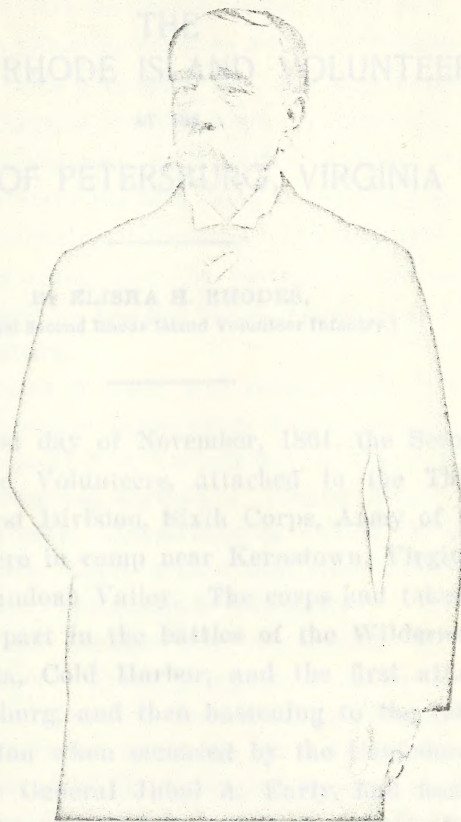
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THE
SECOND RHODE ISLAND VOLUNTEERS
AT
THE
SIEGE OF PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA



MR. ELISHA H. RHODES.

Second Rhode Island Volunteer Infantry.

On the last day of November, 1861, the Second Rhode Island Volunteers, attached to the Third Brigade, First Division, Sixth Corps, Army of the Potomac, were in camp near Kernstown, Virginia, in the Shenandoah Valley. The corps had taken a conspicuous part in the battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, and the first attack upon Petersburg, and then hastening to the relief of Washington, were ordered by the Department Army under General John A. Dix, to re-enter the Valley under General Sheridan.

Elisha H. Rhodes

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SECOND RHODE ISLAND VOLUNTEERS
AT THE
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By ELISHA H. RHODES,
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On the date mentioned above (November 30), I made the following entry in my diary: "Home again in camp with a cheerful fire, and very happy with my comfortable surroundings. To-morrow I shall move my regiment to a better location, where I expect to make the best camp in the army and hope to remain during the winter." At midnight we did move our camp, and the movement was not completed until we reached the entrenchments in front of Petersburg.

The Third Brigade was commanded by Colonel Oliver Edwards (afterwards Brigadier and Brevet Major-General U. S. Volunteers), and was composed of the following regiments: Second Rhode Island, Thirty-seventh Massachusetts, Fifth Wisconsin, Forty-ninth, Eighty-second and One Hundred and Nineteenth Pennsylvania Volunteers.

The First Division was commanded by Brevet Major-General Frank Wheaton, a native of Rhode Island, and formerly Colonel of the Second Rhode Island Regiment, while the Sixth Corps was under the command of Major-General Horatio G. Wright, an officer distinguished both for gallantry and ability.

On the morning of December 1 our brigade, having marched to Stephenson's Depot, took cars for Washington via Harper's Ferry, where we arrived about noon on the 2d. Marching to the wharf, the Second Rhode Island and Eighty-second Pennsylvania embarked on the steamer "City of Albany," and proceeded down the river to Alexandria, joined the fleet of transports and anchored for the night.

At daylight on the 3d, General Wheaton arrived on the steamer "Idaho," and the entire fleet conveying the First Division started on the journey down the Potomac. On the afternoon of the 4th we arrived at City Point and took cars for the front. We here had an opportunity of testing the famous military railroad in the rear of the Union lines. Built upon the surface of the ground, with little if any attempt at grading, the chances were against the safety of the passengers.

At one point the lines ran within range of the enemy's batteries, and during the winter, when business or pleasure called us to City Point, we always took into consideration the chances of being thrown from the track or killed by Confederate shells. But

this did not prevent frequent applications for passes to visit the base of supplies. Arriving at Parkes Station we left the cars, and it being very dark, we went into camp for the night. Not knowing our exact location, there was some discussion as to the distance we were from the front. This question was soon settled by the sharp crack of the rifles as the pickets fired upon each other. December 5 the corps moved into the intrenchments on the left of the Ninth Corps and relieved the Fifth Corps, who were sent to another part of the line. Our brigade was stationed between Battery Twenty-six and Fort Wadsworth.

This last was a large enclosed work built across the Weldon Railroad, and was garrisoned by details from our brigade with Battery E, First Rhode Island Light Artillery, commanded by Brevet Major William B. Rhodes. In front of our brigade we found a high and strong earthwork with a banquette for infantry to stand upon, while in front of the deep ditch was arranged an elaborate system of abatis and trip wires. The distance to the enemy's main lines at this point was nearly two

miles, but the rifle pits occupied by the pickets of each army were quite near to each other. The trees between the lines had been slashed and lay in all conceivable positions, rendering the space seemingly impassable.

The Fifth Corps left some very good quarters, but remembering my plans while in the valley to have the best camp in the army, I caused the entire camp to be reconstructed, and soon had a village of huts that were comfortable, if not ornate.

On our right firing was kept up on the Ninth Corps front and we could see constantly, both day and night, the bursting shells. In fact, from the hour of our arrival until the termination of the siege four months afterwards, we never knew a day that the roar of cannon was not brought to our ears. Day or night, it was always to be heard, and I remember well the pleasure I felt upon taking a trip down the James River during the winter, to be able to go to sleep without hearing the roar of the batteries.

Little progress had been made in the siege during our absence in the valley. The mine had been ex-

ploded and many lives had been lost, but the end seemed as far off as in the previous July, when we left the trenches to go to the relief of the Capital. On December 7 I took my first tour of duty as division officer of the day in charge of the picket line.

By an arrangement with the officer in charge of the enemy's line, firing was prohibited.

On the afternoon of the 9th I returned to camp and found the Sixth Corps under marching orders. At 4 p. m. we left camp, and marching on the Squirrel Level road, we reached the vicinity of Hatcher's Run about midnight, in the midst of a severe storm of rain and snow. Here we halted in a swamp filled with fallen timber and water. Oh, how cold it was! The clothing of the men soon became rigid with ice, and sleep was impossible. In fact, the snow and water was so deep that it was only after many failures that fires could be started. I remember this particular night as the most uncomfortable and distressing experience of my entire army life.

At daylight the next morning our brigade moved to the edge of the swamp and built a line of earth-

works. The enemy discovered our works and made a feeble attempt to take them, but were easily repulsed. In fact, it was too cold for either side to fight with any degree of spirit. Here we remained until about 5 p. m., when we marched back to our old camp in front of Petersburg, and the men entered their huts almost exhausted with cold and fatigue. We had just settled down in front of our fires when orders came for our brigade to move again, and this time in the opposite direction. We started off in the mud and water and marched to the vicinity of Fort Sedgwick on the Ninth Corps front. Here I put my troops into huts without roofs, and myself and staff sat by a fire all night, trying to keep from freezing.

The next day (Sunday) we remained in this camp until dark and then returned to our quarters. As soon as the men had recovered from the fatigue resulting from the severe work described above, regular camp duty was taken up, and we employed our time in battalion drills and movements in defence of our line of works.

Large details were daily made for fatigue, and an

important work was constructed on the left of the corps, named Fort Fisher. Inspections, reviews and brigade dress parades were held, and but for the continual firing on our right and the knowledge that only two miles of slashed timber separated us from the enemy, we might have supposed ourselves again in our camp near Washington.

The year 1864 at last came to an end, and with the anticipation of a speedy victory we entered upon a new year.

I find in my diary, under date of January 1, 1865, many bright anticipations of future victories and a glorious termination of the war. In fact, at this date we began to see the beginning of the end.

The Army of the Potomac was tightening its grip upon the doomed cities of Petersburg and Richmond, and it was only a question of time when we should receive the rewards of our four years of service. An event took place early in the year that produced such an impression upon my mind that I find that I recorded it with all its horrible details. Friday, January 6, a private of the Fourth New Jersey Volunteers was executed as a deserter

and the entire First Division was by order directed to witness the scene. I had always avoided military executions, and asked to be excused from attending this one, but my request was denied.

The condemned man, seated upon his coffin in an ambulance and attended by a chaplain, rode through all the camps of the division. The troops were then formed on three sides of a square, while the grave occupied the fourth side. The solemn procession escorting the prisoner soon entered the square and proceeded to the grave, where the prisoner was blindfolded and seated upon the rough box that was soon to contain his remains. The chaplain offered prayer and the last act was about to take place. During my service I had seen many thousand dead men, and while I knew that this man deserved his fate, yet I determined not to see him die. The firing party was stationed in front of the doomed man, and I heard the command of the provost-marshal, "Ready, aim," and then, notwithstanding my resolution, some horrible fascination caused me to turn my head as I was sitting upon my horse, just as the word "Fire" was given,

and I saw him fall dead upon his coffin. The troops were formed in column of companies and marched past the body as it lay upon the coffin, and as each company passed the command "Eyes right" was given. The troops then returned to camp, the bands and drum corps playing quick time.

Monday, February 5, found the regiment again upon an expedition to Hatcher's Run. Here we built a line of rifle pits, and as soon as they were finished we were ordered to cross the Run, and other troops had the benefit of our labors by occupying our intrenched line.

The Second Brigade attacked the enemy's line, while our brigade acted as a reserve. As the fight progressed we were ordered to take possession of a line of earthworks and shelter our men from the severe fire. This was certainly a fortunate move, for the attacking line was driven back, and but for the strong position occupied by the reserves, disaster must have followed. Darkness put an end to the fight, and we lay down to sleep, to be awakened by a severe storm of hail and snow. Fires were started to dry our clothing, but this brought

upon us a terrific fire of shot and shell from the Confederate batteries.

The next morning the Fifth Corps was sent forward into the woods in front of our line of works, and for a time the noise of the conflict was loud and unceasing. The entire day was passed under fire, and only at night did the iron storm cease. But the rain and hail continued, and again the attempt to get possession of the South Side Railroad failed. The troops quietly left the enemy's front at midnight and we returned to our permanent camp.

This South Side Railroad was an object of strife during the entire winter of 1864 and 1865, and several attempts were made to capture and hold it. But not until the last days of the siege did we succeed. Let me try to give you an idea of our daily life. The intrenchments in front of each regiment are divided into as many spaces as there are companies, and each company has its letter painted on the section. If an alarm is sounded, day or night, the soldier seizes his gun and equipments and hurries to his place. Several experiments were tried by sounding false alarms, but it was soon

found that the enemy, as a rule, would save us that trouble by giving us plenty of genuine ones. The men were obliged to sleep in their clothing, with gun and equipments by their sides. Just before daylight the officer in charge of the trench guards would cause the officers and men to be awakened, and the line would be quietly formed in rear of the works. Arms would be stacked, and then preparation be made as if for a march. Knapsacks would be packed, or blankets rolled, and haversacks and canteens made ready. At headquarters horses were saddled and baggage made ready for removal. The men remained in line until sunrise, and then were dismissed by a signal from brigade headquarters. All this, of course, if no attack was made by the enemy. It frequently happened, however, that an affair would take place upon the picket line in front, and reserves from the camps would be sent to the relief of the line. When this reserve was called for, the men would mount the parapet, and, clearing the ditch, make their way through the slashing to the front.

If the morning proved to be quiet, the usual

routine of camp life went on, with the exception that a portion of each regiment was kept on duty in the intrenchments.

February 21 we received the news of the fall of Charleston, and salutes were fired along the entire line. In order that there might be no waste of time or powder, the guns were shotted and trained on the enemy's works. This day was one of great rejoicing, and we began to predict a speedy termination of the war.

Washington's Birthday was celebrated in a suitable manner and was much enjoyed. The officers of the One Hundred and Nineteenth Pennsylvania Volunteers had a flag-raising in the camp, followed by a collation that excited the admiration of all who were so fortunate as to be present. In the evening the brigade commander gave a supper at his headquarters and caused the grove in front to be illuminated. The fun and frolic was at its height when an order was received for the troops to be held in readiness to repel an attack on the Sixth Corps front. This order broke up the party, and in sorrow and disgust we returned to our camps and

doubled the trench guards and made ready for a fight. The troops were formed in the midst of a severe rainstorm (it always rained at Petersburg), and we waited the attack that never came. Some of us thought that this order came from officers who were not invited to the supper.

On this night an officer and thirty men deserted from the enemy and came into our brigade line. Let me again quote from my diary: "February 25, 1865. If the news of to-day be true, the rebels are preparing to evacuate Petersburg. General Meade ordered all the batteries on the Ninth Corps front to open on the enemy's works, and as I write the guns are booming and the air is full of bursting shell. It is raining and very dark, but the artillery duel is kept up and I can trace the lighted fuses of the shells as they cross each other in their flight.

"I am on duty as Division Officer of the Picket, and this morning took a ride along the lines. The rebels were quiet and did not fire upon me. Last night one hundred and sixty rebel deserters came into our lines. We have a supply of printed circulars offering to pay each rebel deserter for his

musket and equipments and to give him a free passage north. These circulars are sent out between the lines at night and left among the trees, and in some way they get into the hands of the enemy."

The division officer remains on duty for three days, and has a bullet proof hut on the line in which to sleep. The officers and men on picket are detailed for twenty-four hours of duty and are not allowed to sleep. A guard is stationed near the hut, while in front the reserves are in rifle pits. The picket line proper is about fifty yards in advance, while at a distance of three hundred yards the rebels can be plainly seen. We have agreed not to fire during the daytime, but as soon as darkness comes on the rebels open fire in order to prevent their men from deserting. After inspecting the lines of the three brigades I laid down to sleep, giving instructions to the sergeant in charge not to allow any one to enter the hut. After sleeping a short time, I heard some one say, "Colonel," and looking up I saw to my astonishment four rebel soldiers. My first thought was that I was a prisoner or about to become one, and I proceeded to

draw a revolver, but was stopped by the sergeant who was standing near. These four men were deserters, and belonged to the Thirty-seventh North Carolina Regiment. I examined them and took down their answers to certain questions that we were by orders directed to ask them, and then send them to corps headquarters. As they were leaving one of them gave me the name of a friend belonging to his company who was to try to desert that night, and requested me to send him along promptly in order that they might go north together.

Soon, in the midst of the firing a rebel picket shouted, "Halt and come back," while our boys replied, "Come in, Johnny," and a rebel soldier came crashing through the brush and was brought to my quarters. Suspecting who he might be, I addressed him by the name given me by the previous prisoner. He looked somewhat surprised, but admitted that I was right. I then told him his captain's name, the letter of his company, number of his regiment, brigade, division, etc., also the name of the officer in charge of their picket line. The man listened in a dazed sort of a way and then said, "I always heard

tell that you Yankees were right smart, but how did you find out so much about me?" I replied that it was all right, that we had ways of obtaining information that they knew nothing about.

He left, impressed with the idea that the Yankees were a mysterious people.

The end of the siege was evidently drawing near, and much anxiety was felt by commanding officers. The following order issued February 21 will explain the dispositions made to repel an attack:

"HEADQUARTERS THIRD BRIGADE

"FIRST DIVISION, SIXTH CORPS, February 21, 1865.

"GENERAL ORDER

No. 9.

EXTRACT

"To conform to General Order No. 27, Headquarters, 1st Division, 6th Army Corps, of this date, the following disposition of the line of defense of this brigade front is made:

"49th Pennsylvania Volunteers to garrison Fort Wadsworth and small section of rifle pit on its right.

"37th Massachusetts Volunteers, from centre of its camp to the left of rifle pit in its front.

"5th Wisconsin Volunteers, from centre of its camp and the centre of camp of 37th Massachusetts Volunteers.

"2nd Rhode Island Volunteers, from left of its camp to the centre of camp of 5th Wisconsin Volunteers.

"82nd Pennsylvania Volunteers, from sally port on right of its camp to the left of the 2nd Rhode Island Volunteers.

"119th Pennsylvania Volunteers, from Battery 26 to the sally port on the left of the Battery.

"The 49th Pennsylvania Volunteers will relieve the infantry guards in Fort Wadsworth, and after to-morrow will be relieved from details for picket duty.

"In case of a movement or attack from the enemy they will garrison the fort.

"The details, one-tenth (1-10) from each regiment for trench duty, will be as follows:

"From the 2nd Rhode Island Volunteers, 31 enlisted men.

"From 5th Wisconsin, 54 enlisted men.

"From 37th Massachusetts, 33 enlisted men.

"From 49th Pennsylvania, 35 enlisted men.

"From 82nd Pennsylvania, 61 enlisted men.

"From 119th Pennsylvania, 23 enlisted men.

"Only one third of the number will be allowed to sleep at one time. This guard will mount sentinels on the breastworks on their proper front, not more than fifty paces apart. A drummer will accompany each detail and the roll will be called every two hours while on duty.

"The detail will be put on duty at retreat and relieved every morning at Guard Mount.

"In case of attack the details will be deployed along the front to which the commands have been assigned, and so remain until the troops assume their positions, when they will take their proper places in the line of battle."

Notwithstanding the excitement of our daily life, and the constant exposure to death, the sad scenes which were witnessed began to have a depressing influence upon both officers and men. Daily drills were held when the weather and the enemy per-

mitted, and the enlisted men were encouraged to engage in sports of various kinds. At headquarters we held evening schools for the study of tactics, classes for reading, and Longfellow and Shakespeare became familiar to some who had not before manifested an interest in poetry. We also organized a council of the Union League, and amid the sound of cannon and rattle of the muskets we initiated officers into the secret mysteries of that now defunct patriotic society. The pickets were attacked almost daily, and these attacks merely excited a passing interest. We felt quite secure behind our walls of logs and sand, and rather lived in the hope that the enemy would make a serious attack upon our lines, and give us a chance to follow them into their own stronghold. March 11 General Grant reviewed our division, or so much of it as could be spared from the trenches. This event helped to relieve, for a time, the strain that was felt by all the troops.

On March 14 a party of gentlemen from Rhode Island, accompanied by a lady from Chicago, visited our camp. Having received timely notice that the

party would arrive by morning train, much preparation was made to give them a proper reception. Invitations were issued for dinner, and even the men entered into the spirit of the occasion and prepared for the unusual event of having a lady pass a day in the trenches. The party arrived in due time, and while the presentation of the officers was being made, the rebels opened fire from their batteries and made a bold advance upon our division line. My first thought was naturally for the safety of our guests, and hastily directing them to a refuge behind a hill in the rear of our camp, I joined my command in the trenches. Much to our astonishment, the lady refused to seek a place of safety and took her place with the men behind the parapet, where her presence was greeted with round upon round of cheers. The bullets whistled merrily for a few minutes, and then the attack was over, and only occasional shots were fired by the pickets.

This incident, so unusual in the history of wars, furnished a topic of conversation until the close of the siege.

St. Patrick's Day was celebrated with much en-

thusiasm by the troops of the Irish brigade, and on invitation I attended the ceremonies. Hurdle races and ditch jumping were the principal amusements, and after seeing one colonel and two enlisted men fatally injured, I returned to camp, satisfied to take my chances with the rebel shot and shell. One of our regular excursions was to the camps of the Fourth and Seventh Rhode Island Volunteers, then forming a part of the garrison of Fort Sedgwick. Here the opposing lines were only a few yards from each other, and the life led by the poor fellows in the principal forts of each side warranted the names bestowed, Fort Hell and Fort Damnation.

Monday, March 20, our division was reviewed by Major-General Meade, commanding the Army of the Potomac, accompanied by our Corps Commander, General H. G. Wright, and Admiral David B. Porter, of the United States Navy. This review was tendered as a compliment to Admiral Porter, and the officers and men felt that a compliment was paid to our division in being selected for this service.

On March 23 a severe gale raged, and was accompanied by clouds of sand which obscured the sun.

The woods and slashings on the rebel picket line caught fire and the enemy were driven from their rifle pits to their main line. The fire, which raged fiercely in our front, prevented our taking advantage of the misfortunes of the enemy.

On the morning of Sunday, March 26, the rebels made an attack upon the Ninth Corps front and captured Fort Stedman. The firing, which was more lively than usual, attracted our attention on the Sixth Corps line, and the troops were immediately formed, in anticipation of orders to go to the help of our comrades on the right. The orders to move soon came, and leaving the trench guards to protect our camp, our division moved at the double quick, a distance of about four miles, to the vicinity of the captured fort. A part of the way we were obliged to pass under fire of the Confederate batteries, and we arrived at the scene of conflict just in time to witness the recapture of Fort Stedman by the gallant division commanded by General John F. Hartranft, of Pennsylvania. It was a superb

sight: the long lines of infantry gradually closing in on the front, the clouds of smoke that marked the line, the grand rush and the cheers of victory as the troops passed the ditch, mounted the parapet and planted their colors. But we were not to share in this glory, and after enduring the fire of the rebel batteries for a while, we retraced our steps to our camps, only to be ordered to the left of the line near Fort Fisher, where the division was massed. Here we were visited by President Lincoln, General Grant and General Meade, who rode through the lines. The object of this move proved to be the gaining of ground from which to make the grand assault which took place a few days later.

The Second Rhode Island came into line upon the extreme right of the division, and we gradually forced the enemy's pickets back to their reserves, who were occupying a heavy line of rifle pits. Here the division made a rush and carried the line, and forced the rebels through the camps erected for the shelter of their pickets. In the confusion of the fight a column of the enemy concealed by the huts made an attempt to turn the right flank of our divi-

sion, but were handsomely stopped by the Second Rhode Island who, changing front to the right, opened a heavy fire, which caused the surrender of a large number of prisoners and the breaking up of the column of attack. We immediately sent for intrenching tools, and turning the enemy's works, we soon connected the line with our main line in the rear. At three o'clock the next morning the division was relieved and returned to camp. Tuesday, March 28, I made my last tour of duty as division officer of the day in charge of the picket line in front of Petersburg. During the previous night the rebels planted a new battery and massed a large force of infantry in our front. Reporting this fact to General Wheaton, commanding the division, that officer sent me a reserve of two thousand men. A deserter coming in reported that the enemy were apprehensive of an attack by us, which may account for the massing of their troops on our front. General Wheaton visited the picket line to-day and together we crawled through the slashing until we nearly reached the enemy's pickets, where, with our glasses, we counted the can-

non in their works, and tried to select positions for our troops to occupy in the coming assault.

Thursday, March 30, 1865, I will again quote from my diary:

"It is raining hard, and far to our left we can hear the booming of cannon and rattle of musketry. We are waiting anxiously for news, as the result of the fight now going on at Five Forks and Hatcher's Run will, it is said, govern our movements. General Sheridan with his cavalry and the Fifth Corps are upon the expedition and we expect great things from him. We are all packed up and only waiting as patiently as possible for orders.

"Last night I went to bed for the first time in nearly three days, but the long roll sounded and I had to turn out and look after my men. To our right the air seemed to be filled with bursting shell. We remained in line until after midnight, and were then dismissed to form line again at 4 p. m.

"March 31, 1865. Surely the end is drawing near. Last night all the regimental commanders were directed to report at brigade headquarters, where we were informed by the general commanding that the

Sixth Corps was to attack Petersburg this morning at 4 o'clock, and that the enemy's works must be taken, no matter what the cost. We have been expecting this for a long time, yet we returned to our camps in a solemn frame of mind and made our preparations. The canvas covers were taken off the huts, knapsacks and haversacks packed, and the troops stacked arms and awaited the order to move. About midnight a staff officer rode over and told me that the order to attack had been countermanded. The rain was falling steadily, and as we had no roofs to our huts, we passed a very uncomfortable night. At 3 A. M. order came for us to move to the assault, but the order was countermanded before we could get out of camp.

"The battle has raged fiercely on our left all day and our turn must come soon.

"Saturday, April 1st, 1865. Still packed up for the move, with orders to be ready to attack at a moment's notice. The enemy are evidently expecting some movement on our part, for their pickets are on the alert, and heavy firing is kept up. The strain upon our nerves is severe, and I feel that the

soon the suspense is ended, the better. We get no news from the left of our line, and our officers and men have anxious looks. I have made every preparation, and have written what may be my last letters."

My next record in my diary is as follows:

"Inside the rebel lines at Petersburg, Sunday evening, April 2, 1865.

"Thank God, Petersburg has fallen. Last night the regimental commanders were ordered to brigade headquarters and we received our final orders.

"Again we were told that we must succeed, for to fail after making the attack, might endanger the safety of the entire army. It was a solemn gathering, and as I left, General Edwards took me by the hand and said, 'God bless you, Colonel, give the rebels to-morrow what Paddy gave the drum, a good beating.' I returned to my camp, assembled the officers, and again tried to impress upon their minds the gravity of the situation. At 10 P. M. all the Sixth Corps batteries opened upon the enemy's works. The noise was deafening, and the shriek of the shot and shell gave us an idea of what we

might expect in the morning. Battery E, commanded by Lieutenant Ezra K. Parker, occupying Fort Wadsworth on the left of our camp, was hard at work. Soon after the firing began our brigade left our camp for the last time. The men were instructed to place their cups and pans inside of their haversacks to avoid noise, and under no circumstances to speak above a whisper or light a match. In silence we marched to Fort Fisher, where our boys had shoveled sand for many weary hours, and passed through its sally port, out on to the plain in front. Here the Sixth Corps was formed in double echelon, with our division upon the right. I passed down the front of the regiment and had the men remove the caps from their muskets, and instructed them not to prime or fire under any circumstances until ordered, as the officers were to lead in the attack, and did not wish to be killed by our own men.

“Before moving, a thick fog settled down, and it was impossible to see the length of a company. Our orders were to move at the sound of a bugle, silently, but straight to the front. While waiting

for the signal, the rebels, although unconscious of the presence of an entire corps in their immediate front, kept up a constant fire from their picket line and caused us great loss. We had with our brigade a mule, belonging to the Pioneer corps, and loaded with picks and shovels. A bullet striking him, he broke loose from his driver and made straight for the rebel line. The noise that he made evidently alarmed the enemy, for they opened a terrific fire from their trench guards. We found the mule this morning tied to a tree in rear of the rebel lines. But for this accident I think that the surprise would have been complete. Just as daylight began to appear, the signal was sounded, and notwithstanding the orders to move silently, the corps set up a mighty shout and dashed forward into the fog.

"The Second Rhode Island was in the second line of the brigade, and as we moved forward in the darkness, it was difficult to keep the position. We soon moved more to the right and reached the rebel picket line, and although receiving their fire, we captured the line without a shot being fired by our

men. Hastily rectifying the alignment in the picket rifle pits, I had just a moment to take in the situation: on our left a four-gun battery was firing canister over our heads, while to our right a two-gun battery was just opening fire. I decided to go in between the two and try to capture one or both. As we reached the enemy's abatis I happened to be on the right of the regiment, and seeing an opening left by the rebels to reach their picket line, I moved the regiment by the flank and then brought them into line in front of the two-gun battery; all this was done hastily and without halting; crossing the ditch, we scrambled and helped each other up the slope of the work and stepped upon the parapet amid the guns of the enemy, who fled to the rear. Here I gave the orders to prime and 'Commence firing' and a rattling volley was sent into the camp. First-Lieutenant Frank S. Halliday, acting-adjutant upon my staff, headed a party of about thirty men, mostly from Company E, charged the four-gun battery mentioned above, and captured three pieces of artillery. The fourth piece was run out of the fort, but before it could escape was captured by

Lieutenant Halliday's men. Private William Railton, Company E, loaded this piece to the muzzle with stones, and as the rebels made a counter-charge to retake the piece, fired it into their midst. The gun burst into fragments, but the enemy made no more charges. Lieutenant John K. Dorrance was wounded, but Lieutenant Halliday had the satisfaction of bringing down with his pistol the man who did it.

"After firing our volley we jumped into the rebel works and gradually forced the enemy to leave the cover of their huts, from behind which they were firing. My orders were to find the Boydton Plank road and then halt. We soon reached the road, and here the other troops of the brigade joined us. The Sixth Corps now found a line perpendicular to the rebel fortification, and we swept down towards Hatcher's Run, taking prisoners and cannon and driving the enemy into the hands of our troops, who had broken through the enemy's line on our left. After marching perhaps three miles, we retraced our steps and soon after midday we found ourselves in front of the enemy's interior lines. We slowly advanced and crowded the rebels, until at dark we could look

down the length of the main streets of the city. General Edwards asked permission to charge with his brigade into the town, but was refused. As darkness settled down upon the scene, the officers of the regiment gathered about the colors, when we sang with grateful hearts, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.'

"Monday, April 3, 1865. This morning at daylight General Edwards sent the Thirty-seventh Massachusetts into Petersburg. The brigade was under arms and watched the regiment, as, with skirmishers deployed, they entered the streets of the city. But all was quiet, and soon the news of the evacuation was known throughout the Sixth Corps. Mayor Towne and other city officials came out with a white flag and surrendered the city (as far as he had authority to do so in his civil capacity) to Brigadier-General Oliver Edwards." The Second Rhode Island met with many losses during the siege, including one officer, wounded. We were not permitted to visit the captured city, but turning our backs upon the place that had caused us so much hardship and sorrow, we took up our march in pursuit of the Army of Northern Virginia, which pursuit ended at Appomattox.

Brig.-Gen. Charles W. Abbott, Jr., has courteously loaned from the records in the Adjutant-General's office, data of the men who wrote many of these historical papers, which is given in the following as a record of their services.

FIRST SERIES

Lt.-Col. Francis D. Rhodes, Second Regiment, R. I. Vol-
unteers. Residence, Providence, R. I. June 1, 1861, enrolled;
June 2, 1861, mustered in. Originally served as Captain of
B. Co. (infantry), September 6, 1861, promoted as Lieut. and

No. 10 of the seventh series completes one hundred printed
papers of the Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society of R. I.
General Elisha H. Rhodes wrote No. 1 and No. 100.

We are asked when this work will end. "The Guard dies,
it does not surrender." These papers will be printed each
year until the last old veteran interested in this work dies.

GEORGE N. BLISS,

Chairman of Publication Committee.

Lt.-Col. J. Archer Mason, First and Second, First Regi-
ment, R. I. Light Artillery. Residence, Providence, R. I.
June 6, 1861, enrolled; June 7, 1861, mustered in.
Originally served as First Lieutenant, Battery A, September
7, 1861, commissioned Captain, ordered to go with the regiment
from September 7, 1861, and assigned to Battery B, October
24, 1861, promoted Major; October 24, 1861, resigned
as Captain, to accept promotion; mustered in as Major on
date October 24, 1861; November, 1861, in command of Battery

Brig.-Gen. Charles W. Abbot, Jr., has courteously furnished from the records in the Adjutant-General's office, data of the men who wrote many of these historical papers, which is given in the following as a resumé of their services.

FIRST SERIES.

LT.-COL. ELISHA H. RHODES, Second Regiment, R. I. Volunteers. Residence, Pawtuxet, R. I. June 5, 1861, enrolled; June 5, 1861, mustered in. Originally served as Corporal, Co. D (old organization). November 6, 1861, detailed as Clerk at Division Headquarters, and so borne until March, 1862; March 1, 1862, promoted Sergeant-Major, and transferred to Non-Commissioned Staff; July 24, 1862, promoted Second Lieutenant, and assigned to Co. D; March 2, 1863, commissioned First Lieutenant, and mustered in as First Lieutenant, to rank as such from April 15, 1863; March 23, 1863, granted leave of absence for ten days; April, 1863, on daily duty commanding Co. B, and so borne until November, 1863; November 6, 1863, appointed Adjutant, and transferred to Field and Staff; February, 1864, on leave of absence for thirty-five days; mustered in as Captain, to date from June 26, 1864, and assigned to Co. B; June, 1864, ordered to command the regiment, and borne as in command until mustered out; December 5, 1864, appointed Brevet-Major, U. S. Volunteers for gallant conduct at the Battle of Winchester, Va., September 19, 1864; January 19, 1865, granted leave of absence for eighteen days; February 6, 1865, promoted Lieutenant-Colonel; Brevet-Colonel U. S. Volunteers, for gallant and meritorious service before Petersburg, Va.; July, 1865, commissioned Colonel, but never mustered as such; July 13, 1865, mustered out.

LT.-COL. J. ALBERT MONROE, Field and Staff, First Regiment, R. I. Light Artillery. Residence, Providence. R. I. June 6, 1861, commissioned; June 6, 1861, mustered in. Originally served as First Lieutenant, Battery A; September 7, 1861, commissioned Captain, mustered in as such to date from September 7, 1861, and assigned to Battery D; October 24, 1862, promoted Major; October 29, 1862, resigned as Captain to accept promotion; mustered in as Major to date October 21, 1862; November, 1862, in command of Camp

Barry, Washington, D. C., and so borne until October, 1863; commissioned Lieutenant-Colonel and mustered in as such to date December 4, 1862; October, 1863, commanding Artillery Brigade, Second Army Corps, Army of Potomac, and so borne until March, 1864; March, 1864, on recruiting service; April, 1864, Inspector of Artillery; May, 1864, commanding Artillery Brigade, Ninth Army Corps, and so borne until October 5, 1864, when mustered out near Poplar Grove Church, Va.

CAPT. GEORGE N. BLISS, Co. C, First R. I. Cavalry. Residence, Pawtucket, R. I. October 4, 1861, commissioned First Lieutenant, Co. G; originally served in Co. B as Private and Quartermaster-Sergeant; borne on extra duty as Quartermaster of regiment from October 14, 1861, to December 21, 1861; June, 1862, assumed command of Co. G; mustered in as Captain to date August 4, 1862, and assigned to Co. C; July 16, 1863, detached for service with detachment; August, 1863, detached for service at Conscript Camp, and so borne until May, 1864; August, 1864, sent to hospital at Annapolis, Md.; September 28, 1864, wounded and captured at Waynesboro, Va.; transferred to Co. C (new organization), by order dated December 21, 1864; February 5, 1865, paroled; honorably discharged to date May 15, 1865.

PAYMASTER'S CLERK FRANK B. BUTTS, U. S. Navy. Originally served as Corporal, Battery E, First Regiment, R. I. Light Artillery. September 30, 1861, enrolled; September 30, 1861, mustered in; discharged to date September 23, 1862; re-enlisted in U. S. Navy October 3, 1862, as Landsman; served on "North Carolina," Washington Station, "Monitor" and "Stepping Stones"; October 2, 1863, discharged from "Stepping Stones"; January 25, 1864, appointed Paymaster's Steward on "Flag," and served as such to March 12, 1865; March 14, 1865, appointed Clerk; April 23, 1865, discharged.

CAPT. CHARLES H. PARKHURST, Co. C, Eleventh R. I. Volunteers. Residence, Providence, R. I. September 19, 1862, enrolled; October 1, 1862, mustered in; July 13, 1863, mustered out.

LT.-COL. CHARLES H. PARKHURST, Third R. I. Cavalry. August 31, 1863, commissioned; February 4, 1864, mustered in; May, 1864, absent, sick; borne as absent on sick leave

from July 15, 1864, until October 28, 1864; February, 1865, in command of three companies of the regiment and so borne until May, 1865; resigned and honorably discharged by order dated May 26, 1865.

COL. EDWIN METCALF, Third Regiment, R. I. Heavy Artillery. August 27, 1861, commissioned; October 9, 1861, mustered in; originally commissioned Major; borne on leave of absence for thirty days from March 26, 1862; May, 1862, in command of Battalion at North Edisto Island; June, 1862, in command of Battalion at James Island; August 5, 1862, resigned; September 15, 1862, commissioned Colonel Eleventh R. I. Volunteers; October 1, 1862 mustered in; November, 1862, resigned; November 11, 1862, appointed Colonel Third Regiment, R. I. Heavy Artillery; July, 1863, Post Commandant at Hilton Head, S. C.; August, 1863, on detached service at New Haven, Conn., and so borne until September 29, 1863; October, 1863, on detached service at Morris Island, S. C., on examining board; November 22, 1863, ordered on detached service to command U. S. forces at Fort Pulaski and Tybee Island, Ga., and so borne until January, 1864; February 5, 1864, resigned.

SECOND SERIES.

ACTG. ASST. PAYMASTER SAMUEL T. BROWNE, U. S. Navy (Regular), appointed from Rhode Island. Originally served as Private, Co. D, Tenth R. I. Volunteers. Residence, Providence, R. I. May 26, 1862, enrolled; May 26, 1862, mustered in; September 1, 1862, mustered out; September 30, 1862, appointed Acting Assistant Paymaster, U. S. Navy; during service, served on "Montauk," "Onondaga," "Mackinaw," "Ashuelot," "Phlox," and "Powhatan"; December 20, 1864, resigned as Acting Assistant Paymaster; March 9, 1865, appointed Assistant Paymaster; May 4, 1866, commissioned Passed Assistant Paymaster; March 22, 1867, commissioned Paymaster; borne as Naval Storekeeper at Rio de Janeiro and at Naval Academy; June 11, 1870, ordered on special duty at Washington; June 15, 1881, died at Newport, R. I.

FIRST LT. CALEB H. BARNEY, Co. F, Fourteenth R. I. Heavy Artillery. Originally served as Sergeant, Co. A, Fifth R. I. Heavy Artillery. Residence, Providence, R. I. December 4, 1861, enrolled; December 27, 1861, mustered in; originally served as Private; promoted Corporal; June, 1862, absent on furlough, sick; July, 1863, on detached service by order, and so borne until January, 1864; January 14, 1864, discharged by reason of promotion in Fourteenth R. I. Heavy Artillery; November 15, 1863, commissioned First Lieutenant, Co. F, Fourteenth R. I. Heavy Artillery; mustered in to date December 2, 1863; originally served in Co. K; January 20, 1864, transferred to Co. F by general order dated December 26, 1863; January 21, 1864, detached as Battalion Adjutant, and so borne until March, 1864; detached as Post Adjutant by order dated March 27, 1864, and so borne until August, 1864; August 24, 1864, ordered on special duty as Adjutant, Second Battalion; borne on special duty as Battalion and Post Adjutant from September 23, 1864, until January, 1865; October 2, 1865, mustered out.

SECOND LT. PHILIP S. CHASE, Battery F, First R. I. Light Artillery. Residence, Portsmouth, R. I. October 7, 1861, enrolled; October 29, 1861, mustered in; originally served as Corporal; May, 1863, discharged as First Sergeant, by reason of promotion; May 14, 1863, commissioned Second Lieutenant; mustered in as Second Lieutenant; granted leave of absence for twenty-five days, from June 24, 1863; December, 1863, granted leave of absence for ten days by special order; borne in command of Battery from October 27, 1864, until November, 1864; November 2, 1864, mustered out at Chapin's Farm, Va., to date October 31, 1864.

ACTG. ENSIGN WILLIAM B. AVERY, U. S. Navy. Appointed from Rhode Island. Originally served in Co. A, First Regiment, R. I. Detached Militia. Residence, Providence, R. I. April 17, 1861, enrolled as Private; May 2, 1861, mustered in; August 2, 1861, mustered out; appointed Acting Ensign, U. S. Navy, June 15, 1863; served on "Dawn"; August 10, 1865, honorably discharged.

MAJ.-GEN. AMBROSE E. BURNSIDE, U. S. Volunteers. Appointed from Rhode Island. Originally served as Colonel,

First Regiment, R. I. Detached Militia. April 17, 1861, enrolled; May 2, 1861, mustered in; August 2, 1861, mustered out; August 6, 1861, commissioned Brigadier-General, U. S. Volunteers; March 18, 1862, commissioned Major-General; resolution of January 28, 1864, that the thanks of Congress be, and they are presented to Major-General Ambrose E. Burnside, and through him to the officers and men who fought under his command, for their gallantry, good conduct, and soldier-like endurance; April 15, 1865, resigned.

CAPT. JOSHUA M. ADDEMAN, Co. H, Fourteenth R. I. Heavy Artillery. Residence, Providence, R. I. Originally served as Private, Co. B, Tenth Regiment, R. I. Volunteers. May 26, 1862, enrolled; twenty-sixth day of May, 1862, mustered in; September 1, 1862, mustered out; commissioned Captain Co. I, December 19, 1863; mustered to date November 23, 1863, by order dated January 12, 1864; January 13, 1864, transferred to Co. H; November 17, 1864, ordered on special duty, Judge Advocate, Military Commission; October 2, 1865, mustered out.

SECOND LT. GEORGE B. PECK, JR., Co. G, Second R. I. Volunteers. Residence, Providence, R. I. December 13, 1864, enrolled; December 13, 1864, mustered in; April 6, 1865, wounded at the battle of Salor's Creek, sent to hospital, and borne as absent sick until June, 1865; June 30, 1865, resigned.

HORATIO ROGERS, JR., Brevet Brigadier-General of Volunteers. Residence, Providence, R. I. Originally served as Major, Field and Staff, Third Regiment, R. I. Heavy Artillery. August 27, 1861, commissioned; originally served as First Lieutenant, Co. D; commissioned Captain to date October 9, 1861; October 9, 1861, mustered in as Captain, and transferred to Co. H; January 4, 1862, ordered to Fort Seward; May, 1862, ordered to North Edisto; August 18, 1862, commissioned Major; December 27, 1863, commissioned Colonel, Eleventh R. I. Volunteers; January 10, 1863, resigned; January 22, 1863, reported for duty; February 6, 1863, resigned; January 31, 1863, commissioned Colonel Second R. I. Volunteers; February 6, 1863, mustered in; on leave of absence for twenty days from March 19, 1863; January, 1864, resigned and honorably discharged January 15, 1864; March 13, 1865, Brevet

Brigadier-General of Volunteers, for gallant and meritorious services during the war.

CHAPLAIN FREDERICK DENISON, First R. I. Cavalry. Residence, Pawtucket, R. I. November 7, 1861, commissioned; borne on leave of absence (sick), from November 14, 1862, until December 4, 1862; January 19, 1863, resigned and honorably discharged; appointed Chaplain, Third Regiment, R. I. Heavy Artillery, January 20, 1863; January 20, 1863, mustered in; granted leave of absence by order dated May 9, 1863; September 29, 1863, returned to duty; October, 1863, on detached service with Battalion at Morris Island, S. C.; January, 1864, at Fort Pulaski, and so borne until September, 1864, when he was ordered to Rhode Island for muster out; October 5, 1864, mustered out.

PRIV. WILLIAM A. SPICER, Co. B, Tenth R. I. Volunteers. Residence, Providence, R. I. May 26, 1862, enrolled; May 26, 1862, mustered in; July 1, 1862, detailed for special service as Clerk for General Pope, at Washington, by order from Headquarters; September 1, 1862, mustered out.

SECOND LT. CHARLES H. WILLIAMS, Co. B, Third R. I. Heavy Artillery. Residence, Providence, R. I. August 20, 1861, enrolled; August 20, 1861, mustered in; originally served as Sergeant, Co. A; January 1, 1863, promoted First Sergeant; January 16, 1864, granted furlough of twenty-five days; February 3, 1864, commissioned Second Lieutenant, and mustered in as such to date February 13, 1864, and assigned to Co. F, by order dated February 14, 1864; September, 1864, with Co. H; October 6, 1864, transferred to Co. B; August 23, 1865, commissioned First Lieutenant (never mustered); August 27, 1865, mustered out.

CHAPLAIN AUGUSTUS WOODBURY, First Regiment, R. I. Detached Militia. Residence, Providence, R. I. April 17, 1861, enrolled; May 2, 1861, mustered in; August 2, 1861, mustered out.

FIRST LT. JOHN K. BUCKLIN, Battery E, First R. I. Light Artillery. Residence, Providence, R. I. September 30, 1861, enrolled; September 30, 1861, mustered in; originally served as Quartermaster-Sergeant; March 1, 1862, commissioned

Second Lieutenant, and discharged as Quartermaster-Sergeant to accept commission; September 3, 1862, sent to General Hospital, and borne as in General Hospital until December, 1862, when he returned; December 31, 1862, commissioned First Lieutenant; January 6, 1863, discharged as Second Lieutenant to accept commission; July, 1863, wounded at the battle of Gettysburg, Pa.; August, 1863, commanding Battery, and so borne until April, 1864; October, 1863, on detached service as A. A. A. G., Artillery Brigade, Third Corps; borne on detached service as A. D. C., Headquarters, Artillery Brigade, Sixth Corps, from May 4, 1864, until February, 1865; January 11, 1865, commissioned Captain (never mustered); February 2, 1865, mustered out; Brevet-Captain for gallant, meritorious and oftentimes distinguished service throughout the campaign before Richmond and the Valley of the Shenandoah, to date from October 19, 1864.

THIRD SERIES.

CAPT. THOMAS SIMPSON, Captain Battery F, First R. I. Light Artillery. Residence, Providence, R. I. Originally served as Corporal, First Light Battery, R. I. Volunteers, April 17, 1861, May 2, 1861; August 6, 1861, mustered out; October 17, 1861, commissioned Second Lieutenant, Battery F, First R. I. Light Artillery; October 29, 1861, mustered in; borne on detached service from April 14, 1862, until May, 1862; July 30, 1862, ordered on detached service; August 1, 1862, returned to Battery; November 3, 1862, commissioned and mustered in as First Lieutenant; April 9, 1863, assumed command of Battery, and borne as in command until September 25, 1863, when granted leave of absence for twenty days, by order dated September 18, 1863; November 28, 1863, assumed command of Battery; December 23, 1863, assumed command of Battery; commanding Battery from May 16, 1864, until October, 1864; October 2, 1864, captured at Charles City Courthouse; February 2, 1865, paroled at James River, Va.; February 23, 1865, reported at Annapolis, Md.; March

31, 1865, commissioned Captain; April 15, 1865, exchanged and ordered to regiment; mustered in as Captain to date April 12, 1865; June 27, 1865, mustered out.

CAPT. OSCAR LAPHAM, Co. K, Twelfth R. I. Volunteers. Residence, Burrillville, R. I. October 10, 1862, commissioned; October 13, 1862, mustered in; originally served as First Lieutenant, Co. B; November 7, 1862, detached from regiment as A. D. C. to D. R. Wright, Colonel commanding First Brigade, Casey's Division; December 10, 1862, returned to regiment; December 27, 1862, appointed Adjutant; March, 1863, absent on furlough; March 24, 1863, commissioned Captain; April 15, 1863, mustered in, and assigned to Co. K; June 29, 1863, detached for duty as Judge Advocate on Court Martial at Jamestown; July 29, 1863, mustered out.

G. M. SGT. PARDON E. TILLINGHAST, Twelfth Regiment, R. I. Volunteers. Residence, Pawtucket, R. I. September 13, 1862, enrolled; October 13, 1862, mustered in; July 29, 1863, mustered out.

CAPT. WILLIAM W. DOUGLAS, Co. C, Fifth R. I. Heavy Artillery. Residence, Providence, R. I. November 30, 1861, commissioned; December 14, 1861, mustered in; originally served as Second Lieutenant, Co. B; borne in command of Co. D from April 10, 1862, until June 7, 1862; June 7, 1862, commissioned First Lieutenant, and assigned to Co. D; borne on detached service as Provost Marshal, District of Beaufort, from June 30, 1862, until August 7, 1862; September 26, 1862, ordered on recruiting service at Providence, R. I.; February 14, 1863, commissioned Captain and assigned to Co. C; on recruiting service from July 6, 1863, until February 14, 1864; borne in command at Fort Union, N. C., from May 5, 1864, until May 20, 1864; borne in command at Fort Gaston, N. C., from May 21, 1864, until December 20, 1864; September, 1864, on sick leave for twenty days, same extended thirty days, by order dated October 19, 1864; December 22, 1864, mustered out at Varina, Va., at expiration term of service.

FIRST SGT. ALONZO WILLIAMS, Battery A, Third R. I. Heavy Artillery. Residence, North Scituate, R. I. September 5, 1861, enrolled; October 5, 1861, mustered in; May 4, 1862,

promoted Corporal; promoted Sergeant to date January 1, 1863; re-mustered as a Veteran Volunteer, to date January 30, 1864; June and July, 1864, absent North on furlough; January 1, 1865, promoted First Sergeant; July 6, 1865, commissioned Second Lieutenant (never mustered); August 4, 1865, mustered out.

FOURTH SERIES.

CORP. WILLIAM H. NICHOLS, Co. A, Seventh Squad, R. I. Cavalry. June 18, 1862, enrolled; June 24, 1862, mustered in; October 2, 1862, mustered out.

PRIV. ALBERT R. GREENE, Co. K, Eleventh R. I. Volunteers. Residence, Warwick, R. I. September 22, 1862, enrolled; October 1, 1862, mustered in; July 13, 1863, mustered out.

PRIV. GEORGE C. SUMNER, Battery D, First R. I. Light Artillery. Residence, Providence, R. I. September 4, 1861, enrolled; September 4, 1861, mustered in; September 3, 1864, mustered out at Charlestown, Va.

PRIV. WILLIAM WHITMAN BAILEY, Co. D, Tenth R. I. Volunteers. Residence, Providence, R. I. May 26, 1862, enrolled; May 26, 1862, mustered in; July 15, 1862, discharged at Fort De Russy on surgeon's certificate.

SGT. JOHN H. RHODES, Fifth R. I. Heavy Artillery and Battery B, First R. I. Light Artillery. Residence, Providence, R. I. August 13, 1861, enrolled; August 13, 1861, mustered in; November 18, 1862, promoted Corporal; August 12, 1864, discharged near Petersburg, Va.; re-enlisted as Private, Battery B, Fifth R. I. Heavy Artillery, July 28, 1863; July 28, 1863, mustered in; borne as absent in hospital at Washington, N. C., from November 17, 1863, until December, 1863; transferred to Third North Carolina Colored Volunteers, by order dated January, 1864.

FIFTH SERIES.

SECOND LT. CHARLES M. SMITH, Co. C, First R. I. Detached Militia; Co. D, Tenth R. I. Volunteers; Co. I, Eleventh R. I. Volunteers, and Co. L, Fourteenth R. I. Heavy Artillery. Residence, Providence, R. I. April 11, 1861, enrolled as Private; May 2, 1861, mustered in; August 2, 1861, mustered out; May 26, 1862, enrolled as Private; May 26, 1862, mustered in; September 1, 1862, mustered out; September 15, 1862, enrolled as Sergeant; October 1, 1862, mustered in; July 13, 1863, mustered out; enrolled in Fourteenth R. I. Heavy Artillery at Dutch Island, R. I.; January 12, 1864, appointed Second Lieutenant; January 30, 1864, mustered in; detached for duty in Co. K, by order dated November 17, 1864; October 2, 1865, mustered out.

SECOND LT. BENJAMIN H. CHILD, Battery H, First R. I. Light Artillery. Residence, Providence, R. I. June 6, 1861, enrolled as Sergeant, Battery A; June 6, 1861, mustered in; July 21, 1861, wounded at the battle of Bull Run, Va.; September 17, 1862, slightly wounded at the battle of Antietam; July 2, 1863, severely wounded at the battle of Gettysburg, Pa., sent to hospital, and borne as in hospital until December 26, 1863, when he joined for duty; January 8, 1864, discharged by reason of promotion to Second Lieutenant, Battery H; November 6, 1863, commissioned Second Lieutenant, Battery H; mustered in to date January 8, 1864; promoted from Sergeant, Battery A; August, 1864, in Rhode Island on leave of absence (sick), for thirty days; November 23, 1864, discharged.

SGT. WILLIAM GARDINER, Co. A, First R. I. Cavalry. Residence, Pawtucket, R. I. October 29, 1861, enrolled; October 29, 1861, mustered in; originally served as Sergeant, Co. F (old organization); June 18, 1863, captured near Middleburg, Va.; subsequently paroled; January 5, 1864, re-mustered as a Veteran Volunteer; June, 1864, absent sick, and so borne until September, 1864; transferred to Co. A (new organization), by order dated December 21, 1864; borne on detached service at Providence Cavalry Brigade Headquarters from March 23, 1865, until June, 1865; August 3, 1865, mustered out.

CAPT. SUMNER U. SHEARMAN, Co. A, Fourth R. I. Volunteers; August 27, 1862; originally served as second Lieutenant; December 7, 1862, mustered in as First Lieutenant; March 2, 1863, mustered in as Captain; July 30, 1864, captured before Petersburg, Va.; December 8, 1864, released from Columbia, S. C.; discharged to date December 18, 1864, by order.

SIXTH SERIES.

CORP. LEVERETT C. STEVENS, Co. E, First R. I. Cavalry. Residence, Providence, R. I. December 9, 1861, enrolled; December 9, 1861, mustered in; originally served as Private; June 23, 1862, discharged for disability, at Washington; re-enlisted in Co. B, September 10, 1862; mustered in September 10, 1862; originally served as Private, Co. E (old organization); June 18, 1863, captured; exchanged; October 12, 1863, taken prisoner at Sulphur Springs, Va.; transferred to Co. B (new organization), by order dated December 21, 1864; April 22, 1865, paroled at Vicksburg, Miss.; July 10, 1865, mustered out.

SGT. WILLIAM J. CROSSLEY, Co. C, Second R. I. Volunteers. Residence, South Providence, R. I. June 5, 1861, enrolled; June 5, 1861, mustered in; July 21, 1861, wounded and captured at the battle of Bull Run; May 25, 1862, paroled at Washington, D. C.; exchanged and returned to the regiment, October 10, 1862; June 10, 1863, promoted Corporal; August 2, 1863, promoted Sergeant; June, 1864, wounded in left hip at Cold Harbor, and admitted to Depot Field Hospital, Sixth Army Corps, Army of Potomac, White House, Va.; rejoined the regiment and mustered out with company, June 17, 1864.

FIRST LT. AND ADJ. HENRY J. SPOONER, Fourth R. I. Volunteers. August 27, 1862, appointed Second Lieutenant and Adjutant; October 5, 1862, mustered in as First Lieutenant, and borne as Adjutant until February 25, 1864, when he was transferred to Co. E, as First Lieutenant; July, 1863, detached at New Haven, Conn., the rendezvous of conscripts

from Rhode Island, and so borne until November, 1863; borne as absent sick from October 23, 1863, until February, 1864; February, 1864, Assistant Commissary of Subsistence, Third Brigade, Heckman's Division, Eighteenth Army Corps, and so borne until April, 1864; April, 1864, Assistant Commissary of Subsistence on Staff of Colonel Steere; April 30, 1864, ordered to act as Assistant Commissary of Subsistence, Second Brigade, First Division, Eighteenth Army Corps, and so borne until November, 1864; November, 1864, Acting Adjutant, Seventh R. I. Volunteers; and mustered out as First Lieutenant and Adjutant February 3, 1865, being rendered supernumerary by consolidation.

COL. JAMES SHAW, JR., Brevet Brigadier-General, Tenth R. I. Volunteers, and Lieutenant-Colonel, Twelfth R. I. Volunteers. May 26, 1862, enrolled at Providence, R. I.; mustered in to date May 26, 1862; originally served in the Tenth Infantry as Lieutenant-Colonel; August 11, 1862, promoted Colonel; September 1, 1862, mustered out; December 31, 1862, commissioned Lieutenant-Colonel, Twelfth R. I. Volunteers; mustered in to date January 5, 1863; July 29, 1863, mustered out; October 27, 1863, appointed Colonel of the Seventh U. S. Colored Troops, and mustered in as such November 14, 1863; In command of Post at Jacksonville, Fla., and Brigadier in expedition at Cedar Creek and Camp Melton; from August 13 to August 21, August 25 to September 25, and October 26 to December 4, 1864, in command of First Brigade, Third Division, Tenth Army Corps; December 4, 1864, in command of First Brigade, Second Division Twenty-fifth Army Corps, and so borne until the Brigade was disbanded by the muster out of the other regiments of the Brigade, February 13, 1866; February 21, 1865, commanding Second Division, Twenty-fifth Army Corps, and so borne until March 13, 1865; January 16, 1866, in command of Sub-District, Victoria, Tex., and so borne until February 21, 1866, when he assumed command of General District of Texas, and remained in command until May 9, 1866; September 30, 1864, wounded in action by rifle ball (contusion of head); March 13, 1865, Brevet Brigadier-General for meritorious service during the war; October 13, 1866, paid and discharged with regiment at Baltimore, Md., the same being then and there disbanded.

CORP. PATRICK EGAN, Co. C, Third R. I. Heavy Artillery. Residence, Providence, R. I. August 22, 1861, enrolled; October 5, 1861, mustered in; August 12, 1863, promoted Corporal; August 22, 1864, discharged.

SEVENTH SERIES.

FIRST LT. WILLIAM H. CHENERY, Fourteenth R. I. Heavy Artillery. Residence, Providence, R. I. December 11, 1861, enrolled in Co. D, Fifth R. I. Heavy Artillery; December 16, 1861, mustered in; May 1, 1862, promoted Corporal; June 13, 1863, promoted Sergeant; August, 1863, on detached service, and so borne until December, 1863; December, 1863, discharged by reason of promotion in the Fourteenth R. I. Heavy Artillery; December 14, 1863, commissioned First Lieutenant, Co. F, Fourteenth R. I. Heavy Artillery; December 21, 1863, mustered in; June 17, 1864, temporarily assigned to Co. E; November, 1864, ordered on duty in Co. G, and so borne until January, 1865; October 2, 1865, mustered out; October 5, 1865, detailed to take command of Co. E, and borne as responsible for ordnance and ordnance stores until disbandment of regiment in November, 1865.

FIRST LT. EZRA K. PARKER, Battery E, First R. I. Light Artillery. Residence, Coventry, R. I. September 7, 1861, commissioned Second Lieutenant, Battery D; September 9, 1861, mustered in; November 30, 1862, mustered out, and re-commissioned Second Lieutenant by Governor of Rhode Island same day; again mustered in to date December 15, 1862; borne on detached service at Knoxville, Tenn., from December 8, 1863, until January, 1864; March, 1864, absent with leave; April 23, 1864, mustered out by reason of promotion to First Lieutenant, Battery E; April 8, 1864, commissioned First Lieutenant, Battery E; mustered in to date April 23, 1864; September, 1864, commanding Battery; granted leave of absence for fifteen days, by order dated November 23, 1864; December, 1864, commanding Battery, and so borne until June, 1865; June 14, 1865, mustered out.

PRIV. CHARLES O. GREEN, Co. M, First R. I. Cavalry. September 28, 1862, enrolled at Providence, R. I.; October 8, 1862, mustered in; transferred to New Hampshire Cavalry, by order dated January 7, 1864.

CAPT. MARTIN S. JAMES, Co. C, Third R. I. Heavy Artillery. Residence, Providence, R. I. August 20, 1861, enrolled; August 20, 1861, mustered in; originally served as Second Lieutenant, Co. A; January 15, 1862, appointed Post Adjutant; borne on leave of absence for sixty days from April 25, 1862; July 19, 1862, ordered on detached service as A. D. C. on General Terry's staff, and so borne until relieved by order dated August 10, 1863; December 29, 1862, commissioned First Lieutenant; mustered in as such to date January 1, 1863; February 21, 1863, assigned to duty in Co. E; November 2, 1863, commissioned Captain; November 17, 1863, transferred to Co. C, and mustered in as Captain Co. C, to date November 20, 1863; borne on leave of absence for twenty-five days from January 7, 1865; June 9, 1865, mustered out.

CORP. WILLIAM E. MEYER, Co. H, First R. I. Cavalry. October 28, 1861, enrolled at Newport, R. I.; December 14, 1861, mustered in; originally served as Private; November 13, 1863, taken prisoner at New Baltimore; April 30, 1864, relieved at City Point, Va.; October 27, 1864, mustered out near Strasburg, Va.

SECOND LT. DANIEL R. BALLOU, Co. C, Twelfth R. I. Volunteers. Residence, Burrillville, R. I. August 23, 1862, enrolled; October 13, 1862, mustered in; originally served as Private, Co. K; November 9, 1862, promoted Sergeant-Major; mustered out as Sergeant-Major, and mustered in as Second Lieutenant to date November 20, 1862; November 29, 1862, assigned to Co. G; December 13, 1862, wounded at the battle of Fredericksburg, Va.; sent to hospital, and borne as absent sick until February, 1863, when he returned to company; December 30, 1862, transferred to Co. C, as Second Lieutenant; April 25, 1863, resigned.

THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDALS OF HONOR AWARDED TO RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS.

Of the sixteen Medals of Honor in this list nine were won by men who were in this charge of the Sixth Corps at Petersburg, Va., April 2, 1865.

WILLIAM J. BABCOCK.—Sergeant, Co. E, 2d R. I. Inf., March 2, 1895; Petersburg, Va., April 2, 1865.—Planted the flag upon the parapet while the enemy still occupied the line; was the first of his regiment to enter the works.

JAMES A. BARBER.—Corporal, Co. G, 1st R. I. A., June 20, 1866; Petersburg, Va., April 2, 1865.—Was one of a detachment of twenty picked artillerymen who voluntarily accompanied an infantry assaulting party, and who turned upon the enemy the guns captured in the assault.

GEORGE N. BLISS.—Captain, Co. C, 1st R. I. Cav., August 3, 1897; Waynesboro, Va., September 28, 1864.—While in command of the provost guard in the village he saw the Union lines returning before the attack of a greatly superior force of the enemy, mustered his guard, and without order joined in the defense and charged the enemy without support. He received three saber wounds, his horse was shot, and he was taken prisoner.

ZENAS R. BLISS.—Colonel, 7th R. I. Inf., December 30, 1898; Fredericksburg, Va., December 13, 1862.—This officer, to encourage his regiment, which had never before been in action, and which had been ordered to lie down to protect itself from the enemy's fire, arose to his feet, advanced in front of the line, and himself fired several shots at the enemy at short range, being fully exposed to their fire at the time.

JOHN K. BUCKLIN.—First Lieutenant, B. E, 1st R. I. L. A., July 13, 1899; Chancellorsville, Va., May 3, 1863.—Though himself wounded, gallantly fought his section of the battery

under a fierce fire from the enemy until his ammunition was all expended, many of the cannoneers and most of the horses killed or wounded and the enemy within twenty-five yards of the guns, when, disabling one piece, he brought off the other in safety.

JAMES H. BURBANK.—Sergeant, Co. K, 4th R. I. Inf., July 27, 1896; Blackwater, near Franklin, Va., October 3, 1862,—Gallantry in action while on detached service on board a gunboat.

BENJAMIN H. CHILD.—Corporal, Battery A, 1st R. I. L. A., July 20, 1897; Antietam, Md., September 17, 1862,—Was wounded and taken to the rear insensible, but, when partially recovered, insisted on returning to the battery, and resumed command of his piece, so remaining until the close of the battle.

JOHN CORCORAN.—Private, Co. G, 1st R. I. L. A., November 2, 1887; Petersburg, Va., April 2, 1865,—Was one of a detachment of twenty picked artillerymen who voluntarily accompanied an infantry assaulting party, and who turned upon the enemy the guns captured in the assault.

CHARLES D. ENNIS.—Private, Co. G, 1st R. I. L. A., June 28, 1892; Petersburg, Va., April 2, 1865,—Was one of a detachment of twenty picked artillerymen who voluntarily accompanied an infantry assaulting party, and who turned upon the enemy the guns captured in the assault.

JOHN H. HAVRON.—Sergeant, Co. G, 1st R. I. L. A., June 16, 1866; Petersburg, Va., April 2, 1865,—Was one of a detachment of twenty picked artillerymen who voluntarily accompanied an infantry assaulting party, and who turned upon the enemy the guns captured in the assault.

SAMUEL E. LEWIS.—Corporal Co. G, 1st R. I. L. A., June 16, 1866; Petersburg, Va., April 2, 1865,—Was one of a detachment of twenty picked artillerymen who voluntarily accompanied an infantry assaulting party, and who turned upon the enemy the guns captured in the assault.

ARCHIBALD MOLBONE.—Sergeant Co. G, 1st R. I. L. A., June 20, 1866; Petersburg, Va., April 2, 1865,—Was one of a

detachment of twenty picked artillerymen who voluntarily accompanied an infantry assaulting party, and who turned upon the enemy the guns captured in the assault.

THOMAS PARKER.—Corporal, Co. B, 2d R. I. Inf., May 29, 1867; Petersburg, Va., April 2, 1865; Sailors Creek, Va., April 6, 1865,—Carried the regimental colors over the creek after the regiment had broken and been repulsed.

GEORGE W. POTTER.—Private, Co. G, 1st R. I. L. A., March 4, 1886; Petersburg, Va., April 2, 1865,—Was one of a detachment of twenty picked artillerymen who voluntarily accompanied an infantry assaulting party, and who turned upon the enemy the guns captured in the assault.

JOSEPH TAYLOR.—Private, Co. E, 7th R. I. Inf., July 20, 1897; Weldon Railroad, Va., August 18, 1864,—While acting as an orderly to a general officer on the field, and alone, encountered a picket of three of the enemy and compelled their surrender.

JAMES WELSH.—Private, Co. E, 4th R. I. Inf., June 3, 1905; Petersburg, Va., July 30, 1864,—Bore off the regimental colors after the color-sergeant had been wounded and the color-corporal bearing the colors killed, thereby saving the colors from capture.

No. 3. *Rebaptism of a Soldier in the First Church
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No. 4. *My First Cruise at Sea and the Loss of the
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By Edward F. Hunt.*

APPENDIX

The Soldiers' and Sailors' Historical Society of Rhode Island was organized March 17, 1875, for the purpose of putting in the Public Libraries of this and other States printed narratives of personal experiences of soldier life in the war that resulted in saving the Union.

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- No. 15. Prison Life of Lieut. James M. Fales. By GEORGE N. BLISS.

* Lieut. James M. Fales and I were together when this paper was written. As Comrade Fales told the story of his prison life, I wrote it down as nearly as possible in his own words, and then condensed the narrative as much as possible.

—G. N. BLISS.

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